

Bavarian News

Vol. 6, Nr. 2

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt and Garmisch

February 3, 2010

ANSBACH SORT IT OUT

A recycling program seeks to conserve resources and educate its users at the same time

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GARMISCH FAMILY FRIENDLY

Renovation of 81 units gives families moving to Garmisch a wealth of new options for housing

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SCHWEINFURT ALASKA DAYS

Hundreds of Cub Scouts from around Germany get the full winter experience

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HOHENFELS SETTING SIGHTS

The Hohenfels High School Rifle Team heads to its 2nd national competition

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Tax time

It's tax season again and representatives are standing by to provide assistance. Last year, tax offices in the region saved community members \$1.5 million in filing fees.

For locations, hours and contact information, see page 6.

Commute control

Those arriving to work at Grafenwoehr from 6:30-7:30 a.m. may have noticed some roads are inaccessible due to Soldiers conducting physical training.

For details, see the CSM's Corner, page 2.

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Leaders lend their ears

Community Huddle gives Soldiers, family members a voice

Story and photo by
MOLLY HAYDEN
Bavarian News

More than 150 military leaders, Soldiers, family and community members gathered at the Tower View Restaurant, Jan. 28, for the first Community Huddle. The meeting combined previous meetings, town hall and Senior Spouses Roundtable, providing a new outlet to discuss issues pertaining to the community. The huddle is intended to continue monthly.

Col. Chris Sorenson, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr commander, facilitated the meeting, along with Brig. Gen. Steven Salazar, commanding general, Joint Multinational Training Center. Sorenson welcomed the crowd, stating the huddle “belongs to us,” and “community members have a voice.”

Sorenson began the meeting praising the generosity of the military community during the recent Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The Grafenwoehr military community donated a total of \$312,463.21 during the campaign, exceeding the target goal by nearly 20 percent.

“We have a community of caring, a community of giving,” said Sorenson. “This is a key element in creating a community of excellence.”

Suicide was a main topic as Sorenson discussed the proactive measures the suicide prevention task force was taking to decrease the number of suicides and suicide attempts within the garrison.

In 2009, the U.S. Army lost more than 140 Soldiers to suicide, including Soldiers within USAG Grafenwoehr.

Additionally, USAG Grafenwoehr reported several suicidal ideations, gestures or attempts so far in 2010.

Sorenson called the situation “disturbing” and asked military leaders and the community to understand signs and symptoms to help prevent suicide.

Sorenson then introduced the subject matter experts (SMEs).



Col. Chris Sorenson, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr commander (center), and a panel of garrison military leaders listen to questions from the audience during the Community Huddle, Jan. 28.

Dick Cooper, chief, Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and security, presented an overview of upcoming training, including SAEDA/SETA training set to take place on Main Post and

Rose Barracks, Feb. 17 and 18, respectively.

This training is mandatory for all Soldiers and Department of Army civilians. See FEEDBACK page 25

Board of Governors visits Grafenwoehr’s USO

Story and photo by
KIM GILLESPIE
USAG Grafenwoehr Public Affairs

Members of the USO Board of Governors paid a special visit to the Grafenwoehr USO, Jan. 23.

The visit was aimed at ensuring members of the Grafenwoehr Military Community are getting what they need at the new facility. According to Joint Multinational Training Command Chief of Staff Col. Michael Higginbottom, the USO outfitted this recently renovated and staffed this fantastic facility, located in Building 150 (Main Post), and many of the members who attended have close ties to Germany.

Visitors with the USO Board of Governors included: Dennis Swanson, president, Fox TV and USO World Board of Governors member; Sally Ann Zoll, CEO of the nonprofit organization United Through Reading; Mary Louis Austin, president and CEO of the USO Georgia; Lindsey Fischetti, program manager, USO Operations – Arlington; Mike Lewis, director,

USO Germany; Walter Murren, director, USO Europe; and Karl-Heinz Stahl, CEO TKS and USO World Board of Governors member.

Zoll’s organization, United Through Reading, conducts a program that allows Soldiers to make DVDs of themselves reading, so that when they are deployed they can read (via the DVD) to their children. As result of Zoll’s visit, the Grafenwoehr USO will set up for the program, and Zoll will assist with supporting large predeployment preparations, said Col. Chris Sorenson, U.S. Army Grafenwoehr Garrison commander.

In addition to visiting the Grafenwoehr USO facility, the group also toured a unit’s company operations building, single Soldier barracks, and the Netzaberg Housing Area where they viewed a typical Soldier family housing unit. They also met with tenant unit commanders and command sergeants major.

“The visit really gave them a feel for what our Soldiers and family members need and expect from the USO and the Board of Governors pledged their support to our community,” Sorenson added.



Col. Michael Higginbottom, chief of staff, Joint Multinational Training Command, gives a beer stein to Karl-Heinz Stahl, TKS CEO, as Martina Salazar, wife of Brig. Gen. Steven Salazar, commanding general, JMTC, looks on, during a Board of Governors visit to Grafenwoehr’s USO facility, Jan. 23.

Stronger dollar lessens OCOLA

Service members get lower on-post allowance in their January paychecks

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs News Release

Officials at the Defense Travel Management Office recently announced that U.S. service members in Germany will see a 6-10 percent OCOLA drop in their January end-of-month paychecks as the result of changes to Overseas Cost of Living Allowance that took effect Jan. 16.

The decrease in the OCOLA rate is primarily due to a currency adjustment and new Pay System Exchange Rate resulting from a stronger dollar compared to the euro. The purpose of the currency adjustment is to select a PSER that maintains service members’ purchasing power in local currency while ensuring that neither the service member nor the government is disadvantaged over time. On Jan. 16, the PSER changed from \$1.557 buys one euro to \$1.446 buys one euro.

The DTMO Allowances Branch collects and monitors daily exchange rates from DoD community banks (at all major overseas locations), commands, the Department of State and the Wall Street Journal. This allows them to compare the PSER to the Trading Rate of Exchange. Once the See OCOLA page 25

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COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Community asked to cut costs, save

Funding is not a "hot" topic, unless you don't have funds! We are fully funded for life, health safety, Army Family Covenant and Army Forces Generation. We will not compromise these three areas, but everything else is on the table for reduction or elimination. In this edition is a great article by U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt (page 21) that addresses what all of our garrisons will have to do to provide these necessary services while continuing to pay the "must pays" such as refuse, utilities and labor.

Reality dictates that we manage the resources we have and increase efficiencies in every way we can. Our budget is fixed, so every garrison is making the same assessments and decisions we are making.

These tough decisions will that require everyone make adjustments. For instance, we are required to reduce our nontactical vehicle,



or TMP, cost by 25 percent. We know we need to keep our mission vehicles such as MP patrol cars, range control vehicles, the plumber and electrician vehicles and others to ensure we can provide essential mission services. This means that others areas will have to share a bigger percentage of the overall cost reduction. Here at the garrison headquarters, we have already "pooled" our vehicles and are now sharing among directorates rather than every entity having their own. We ask that all of our tenant units and agencies review their requirements now to prepare for our no-later-than savings date of April 1, 2010.

We know shuttle bus service is a necessity, and we also know that some routes and times are underutilized so we must look at adjusting routes and schedules to ensure we are getting our money's worth.

We take great pride in keeping our

community clean and well-kept, but we will likely see the grass grow a little higher in some areas as we bring our garrisons to a common standard.

Utility costs are on the rise. In fact, our three garrison enterprise of Graf, Hohenfels and Garmich will pay close to 44 million dollars for energy in 2010. We are implementing strategies to conserve energy, such as reducing evening exterior lighting levels around our garrison and automatically reducing room temperatures at night and on weekends. We will also install solar panels at select facilities and replace kitchen equipment with high efficiency appliances. These represent areas that we can directly control, yet the majority of our savings will be in how we all actively participate in saving energy such as closing windows when it is cold, and turning off our appliances and lights when not required.

We can all make a difference by offering our suggestions and comments to the Army



Suggestion Program or ICE, both accessible through the garrison Web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil. Stay Army Strong!

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CSM CORNER



Designated running routes alter early morning traffic

A designated running route has been established on Grafenwoehr Main Post to ensure the safety of our Soldiers while conducting physical training (PT). Several main thoroughfares will be used and effectively closed Monday through Friday from 6:30-7:30 a.m. We realize these road closures may inconvenience drivers during these hours, but we must ensure that our two main priorities for Soldiers, safety and combat readiness, are not compromised.

All closed routes are properly marked by barricade or traffic cones, and some traffic control points are manned by Soldiers. Drivers entering at gates 1 and 20 will be required to use Gettysburg Avenue only (which means driving past Grafenwoehr Elementary School and the Chapel). While gates 1 and 20 still offer alternative routes, we encourage everyone

to use gates 3 or 6 during these hours to avoid any additional inconvenience.

Use the following tips for easy access to our facilities: Gettysburg Avenue all along is open access to schools, JAG, CMR Post Office, JMTC Headquarters, Chapel and the banks; access to the shoppette, commissary and PX is granted by entering Gate 9; the two large parking lots located near the Physical Fitness

Center and the Community Mail Room are excellent parking areas if you must exit the area during physical fitness hours; The medical clinic is easily accessed through either Gate 3 or Gate 6; There are provisions in place for dropping off your car at the Car Care Center during the restricted travel time: traffic controllers will ensure the route is clear of Soldiers and then allow cars to enter the Car Care Center parking lot.

Super Bowl Sunday is this weekend, and we know many Soldiers will be watching the game into the early hours of Monday morning. We encourage you all to enjoy the game, but please celebrate safely. There will be numerous on-post viewing parties, including the Zone Sports Bar at Rose Barracks and the USO at Main Post Grafenwoehr.

Our garrison services and support for the Grafenwoehr military community rely on your input. Please ensure you continue to provide comments through our ICE system. ICE comment cards are available at numerous locations around the installation, and can also be submitted through the garrison's Web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil.

*Command Sgt. Maj.
William Berrios
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*



Photo by Spc. Michelle Waters

The U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr will close some roads from 6:30-7:30 a.m. to ensure Soldiers' safety and combat readiness.

COMMENTARY

Spouse discusses challenges, benefits of making new 'egg' friends



JACEY ECKHART
Mandatory Fun

I run out of local friends the way I run out of eggs. I think I've got plenty until I'm making a cake/having a crisis/wanna go to lunch at a place with a waitress. Then I discover that my usual friends have moved or aged-out of the bus stop or made a deployment buddy I cannot budge.

So when I catch an idea about how to make more friends I'm on it.

I was really interested in an entry on World of Psychoogy contributor Therese Borchard's "10 Ways to Make Friends" as well as John Grohol's follow up piece "10 More Ways To make Friends." They offered

some good suggestions: take up bowling, go to church, learn something new, get a dog, talk to strangers.

Click 'em, apply 'em, make 'em your own. But know that those suggestions aren't really ways to make friends. Those are ways to make acquaintances who eventually might turn into good friends.

I think this is a distinction we military folks often miss. We think we're supposed to go out into the world and make instant best friends, bosom buddies, kindred spirits so in tune with our needs that they will wipe our brow while we're in labor — even if we plan never to be in labor again.

So is it any wonder that when we meet someone our own age that we do the instant military download: how old are your kids? Where are you from? We lived in Texas three duty stations ago. Oh, you're military too? My mother-in-law showed up at Thanksgiving without any panties. Blah, blah, blah. The longer you've been a military spouse, the faster you can download 36 relevant items about your life

and the closer you are to being best friends, right?

I just don't know. On one hand, I've made some very intense, fabulous friendships exactly that way without other spouses. On the other hand, I've been so keen on making close friends that I suffer the epic fail when it comes to making acquaintances. Ask anyone at my son's bus stop.

Until recently, I think I've made the mistake that the word "friend" only in that much closer meaning. Instead, I've found that when researchers urge us to make friends as part of our informal support network, they don't just mean best friends. Instead they are including this group of friends who are friends really in the Facebook sense.

They are egg friends. We know their names. We recognize their kids. We would sit next to them at a soccer game or in the staff room if they happened to be there. We meet them as exercise buddies or at Bible study or at the unit picnic. We'd lend them

an egg if asked.

But that's not why I think of them as egg friends. Instead, I collect this kind of friend because they are an absolute necessity — like bread and milk. If you want to feel settled in a particular duty station, you have to know people and be known.

Even if you are an introvert who hates to meet people and would be just fine at home all by yourself, you still need to keep stocked up on this kind of friend. Because there is no substitute.

So pull a napkin over to yourself and make a list of a dozen people who are this kind of friend. Don't have enough to fill a Styrofoam container? Make more. All it takes is a nod and hello.

Editor's Note: Jacey Eckhart is a military/life consultant based in Washington DC. She is the author of The Homefront Club: The Hardheaded Woman's Guide to Raising a Military Family and the voice behind "These Boots." Check out more columns and her speaking schedule at www.jaceyeckhart.com.

Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

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Children helping Children

Netzaberg Elementary students raise money to support relief efforts in Haiti



Story and photos by
MOLLY HAYDEN
Bavarian News

Jason Garcia, a kindergarten student at Netzaberg Elementary School (NES), held a small amount of change in his hands. Although the dream of buying a new toy danced in the back of his mind, Garcia took his hard-earned cash and placed it in a large water bottle strategically placed in the foyer of the school. “That was my allowance,” said Garcia. “The kids need it.” Garcia, along with his fellow classmates and other students at NES, is on a mission to help the children of Haiti. After the devastating earthquake hit Haiti, Jan. 11, Gifted Education Resource Teacher Rhoda Wilner initiated a donation program, engaging the students of NES. “They had recently learned where Haiti was during a geography bee,” said Wilner. “I thought this was a way for them to learn another lesson – compassion.” The donation drive, aptly named “Children helping Children,” gave NES students, parents and community members the opportunity to donate any sum of money to support the relief efforts in Haiti. The immediate response was overwhelming. Within the first few days, the donation bottle saw an influx of loose change and large bills. Children and parents alike donated selflessly. “It’s easy to take the money you’ve been saving up for toys and put it towards something more important,” said Marcella Bannister, a third-grade student. “You can always get toys, but helping the kids in Haiti

is more important.” To date, more than \$1,000 has been collected and the amount continues to climb. The money will be donated to “Save the Children,” an organization that continues to launch emergency relief efforts to assist children and families in Haiti.

I though this was a way for them to learn another lesson - compassion.

Rhoda Wilner
Gifted Education Resource Teacher

Additionally, 92 percent of all expenditures of “Save the Children” go to program services. “The people of Haiti have nothing, so anything we give will help them,” said fifth-grader Gina August, who has extended family currently living in Haiti. “And they really need our help now.” The donation drive is a viable way for the community to support children around the world and is of paramount significance to both NES and the education of its students. “It’s a tragic situation,” said Wilner. “But it’s a learning experience for the children. Helping other children has become very important to them ... and that’s the best lesson they can learn.” To donate, stop by Netzaberg Elementary School or contact Rhoda Wilner at rhoda.wilner@eu.dodea.edu.



Above: Kindergarten student Jason Garcia, 6, places a small amount of change into the donation bottle at Netzaberg Elementary School.

Left: Students of Netzaberg Elementary School gather around a donation bottle holding more than \$1,000. Children, parents and community members donated the money to support the relief efforts in Haiti.

Why is it important to help the children of Haiti in this time of need?



“Because the earthquake took so many innocent lives and people are left with nothing ... We want to help them.”

Gina August
Grade 5



“So many lives were affected, they don’t have anything. It’s the right thing to do.”

Lilli Frazier
Grade 3



“If we send money to Haiti, the kids and their families can have fresh water and food and the kids can get toys.”

Avery Gabavics
Grade 2



“They’re a very poor country, and now they have nothing. If I were in a bad situation, I’d want the people of the world to help me.”

Cameron James
Grade 4



They have suffered too much. If we don’t donate, they couldn’t rebuild schools, hospitals and homes.”

Hugo Rucobo
Grade 5

Passion of AFAP teens will inspire more involvement

Story and photo by
ROB MCIIVAINE
FMWRC Public Affairs

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Throughout the week of the AFAP conference, recently, the 13 Army Teen Panel members developed posters, a cross-garrison simultaneous event, a presentation to senior Army leaders on their activities, a “Strength of the Nation” contest for Army youth during the Month of the Military Child in April, and, most importantly, the top four issues impacting military youth – presented the final morning of the AFAP conference. Inspired by Gen. Rick Lynch, IMCOM commanding general, during his opening remarks at the AFAP conference four days earlier, the teens adopted his message; “Are we doing the right thing; are we doing things right?” They intend to make this theme heard around the world through 30- and a 60-second video spots. “The spots are designed to involve teens in youth centers, Armywide,” Anthony Merriweather said. Merriweather, currently a student at New Mexico State University, is spending his third year with the teen panel, serving this year as a junior advisor. With him is Elizabeth Mobley, the other junior advisor, who is attending Grambling State University and also spending her third year with Army Teen Panel. “We know we are part of the Army Family and we know senior leaders are extremely interested in what we have to say and that they will do their best to resolve our issues,” Merriweather said. From the moment they entered



Junior Advisors Elizabeth Mobley (left), from Grambling State University, La., and Anthony Merriweather, from New Mexico State University, discuss the concept of the presentation for Maj. Gen. Reuben Jones, FMWRC commanding general. The show and tell about their planned activities for the year will be brief but promises to pack a lot of punch for teens Armywide.

their workspace, work was nonstop. Large pads of paper had brainstorming sessions written out with two or three teens sitting with adult advisors as they honed points for the night’s presentation. In one room, Chris Zuhars, CYSS program specialist and video technician, took the script hashed out by the teens and created a 30-second spot. Before lunch, he was on to the 60-second spot, waiting only for the group to choose the music.

In another corner, adult advisor Amy Leon, FMWRC marketing specialist, helped the group with the two posters. “These posters were developed specifically for the teen audience. They all brainstormed their concept based on their theme, ‘Everyday Heroes in our Communities,’ then came up with the words and imagery,” Leon said. The drafts were sent to FMWRC marketing at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, and then returned as

completed posters for review. “Youth are the hardest to reach. I mean each generation seems to learn faster and they have their own language. For instance, the posters use the language of text messaging that isn’t readily understood by adults, but is immediately accepted and understood by teens. What better way to reach our audience then to let us do the talking,” Mobley said. “We want to push these out to garrisons, Armywide,” Leon said,

“through the FMWR marketing facilities where they can be printed out or used digitally and distributed at the garrisons.” Not just through the videos, though, will their voices be heard. According to Donna McGrath, CYSS Army Teen Panel program manager, the Army Teen Panel members were faced with 24 issues that rose from teen discussion at the summer conference. Later, they pared them down to the final four. Last year only three issues were presented. This year, McGrath said, the teens were so passionate about the fourth issue, they allowed it. The issues voted on for presentation to Army senior leaders were: continuation of YLF (Youth Leadership Forums); improve marketing by teens for teens because the message is not reaching the audience; Lifeskills program to help teens later in life through resume building; and their most passionate issue: Take a Field, Make a Field. With construction occurring on many installations, teens are losing their fields for sports. This can lead to a lack of exercise, said the teens, resulting in obesity. With the AFAP forum, they know their voices will be heard. “The Army Teen Panel is beginning to create a synergy between all of the MWR programs,” McGrath said. “After all, our ultimate goal is serving our customers, in our case, the military youth who need to know about the great programs we have for them and to get them involved.” “The process works because today the teens have much more than when Elizabeth and I started out on Army installations,” Merriweather said.

Specialist makes cut, bound for OCS

by **DENVER MAKLE**
JMTC Public Affairs

Who would have guessed the descendant of a Polish slave laborer during World War II, would one day grow up to become an officer in the U.S. Army?

Spc. Magdalena McMillon, radiology specialist at the U.S. Army Health Clinic-Schweinfurt learned she is destined for Officer Candidate School (OCS), recently, after submitting a packet and appearing before a board Nov. 19, 2009, as part of the 7th Army JMTC OCS selection board.

McMillon was selected for a direct commission and Officer Candidate School.

“Anything, anything is possible,” she said. “When we have dreams we should follow them.”

During World War II, McMillon’s grandmother was forced to leave Poland to work on a farm in Germany until U.S. Soldiers liberated Germany.

“I’m a product of what the Army does. If our Army did not fight for freedom, I would not be alive. It [going to Officer Candidate School] means everything to me. It’s a dream come true,” said McMillon. “Growing up, my grandmother always talked about it. It was such an emotional experience for her that American Soldiers rescued her.”

This Soldier has a varied past, Army wife for the past five years.

She taught high school English in Pascagoula, Miss., and taught the German language to students in Poland



Photo by Emily Athens

Spc. Magdalena McMillon, radiology specialist at the Schweinfurt Health Clinic, demonstrates the positioning of a simulated clavicle X-ray to Staff Sgt. Erick Cedeno, occupational therapy assistant.

before aspiring to become a Soldier.

“I always wanted to join the Army,” she said. “My grandmother is very proud of me.”

It’s not cliché. She’s very proud to be an American, and being in the military and being a Soldier means a

lot to her.

McMillon became a naturalized citizen in November 2008. Serving in the Army is just one way to give back, she said.

“I was 27 years old. I joined [the Army] when my husband went to

Afghanistan,” she said. “I needed something to keep myself busy. It was just a good time to do it.”

Her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Ronald McMillon, is eligible to retire in about five years.

Fluent in German, Polish and

Russian, the two met while she was working as an interpreter in Poland.

Ronald describes his wife as his best friend - a very capable and caring individual.

“I’m at the twilight of my career. When I get out I’ll follow her around, and if we have children one day, I’ll take care of the kids,” said Ronald. “This is something we discussed, and we didn’t take it lightly.”

The senior-ranking McMillon said their marriage was made stronger by her decision to join the military because now she has a greater understanding of what he does, and why he does it. Being dual military gave them additional common ground.

“It’s a great trade-off and balance,” he said.

However, he admitted he always wanted her to become an officer. He said she is smart and that’s what attracted him to her.

“She’s a strong woman,” he said. “She can hold her own.”

When asked about embarking on her new career in the Army, she said, “I have a different perspective on life because I came from a place where we didn’t have a lot. I’m from a country where everyone made the same amount of money, regardless of their job.”

Magdalena said she understood early what it means to be in a noble profession.

“It matters what we do, not how much money we make,” she said. “In my wildest dreams, I never would have guessed that I would have this opportunity.”

2010 Census especially important to military families

by **SUSAN R. ANDERSON**
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - With about \$400 billion a year in federal funds at stake, the 2010 census may prove especially important for the thousands of Army families who have relocated since 2000 as a result of Base Realignment and Closure, said a 2010 census media specialist.

The larger the concentration of families in and around the installations that have experienced growth, the larger the support system has to be to accommodate them, said Robert Crockett, also a retired Army sergeant first class.

In addition to being a “snapshot of America,” the census is a device by which federal funds are returned to the states and congressional seats are distributed to accommodate state’s changing needs, he said.

Military families living in areas that have experienced significant growth may see the direct and indirect benefits of their participation in the census through, for example, larger schools, hospitals, roads, housing for elderly, and job training. States that have grown in population since 2000 could also gain congressional seats after the 2010 census, said Crockett.

With only 10 questions, the 2010 census is the shortest to date. However, with so many service members deployed, military families in particular may still have questions regarding how to answer certain questions, he said.

The first question on the census is, “How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment or mobile home on April 1, 2010?”

“If a spouse is overseas, then that person receiving the questionnaire should not count the spouse that is overseas. That spouse overseas would be part of an overseas enumeration,” and he or she will be listed by their home state, said Crockett.

“If your spouse is on a military vessel with a U.S. homeport, then they should be counted



Courtesy photo

The use of GPS technology enabled census workers to reduce the amount of time they spent locating addresses and ultimately helped the 2009 Address Canvassing operation to be completed ahead of schedule.

as part of your household. If your spouse is on a military vessel from a foreign homeport, then they should not be counted as part of your household,” he said.

Military families stateside will receive the census form in the mail just like everyone else.

Service members and their families located overseas will not receive a form. The Defense

Manpower Data Center will provide records to the Census Bureau for service members and military families overseas, based on home of record.

Families stateside who do not return the form within the indicated time will receive repeated notifications from the Census Bureau. Then if the forms are still not received, families can expect a

knock on the door from a census worker.

If someone is apprehensive about speaking with a stranger, they can ask to see the identification card that all census workers must and will carry, Crockett said, or a phone number to their supervisor.

He said the military community might be surprised to learn that the census is the largest mobilization of resources that the nation undertakes.

“There is nothing in the United States that compares with the census effort, this effort to count everyone, only once and in the right place. We have to hire a temporary force of over a million people. That’s roughly the equivalent to the entire population of Hawaii, and we are setting out to count well over 130 million people,” he said.

While participation in the census is required by law, Crockett said all answers are protected.

“The census is not intrusive ... it’s protected by law and none of this information is shared with any other agency whatsoever,” he said.

Those who have filled out a census form in years past may notice differences. Based on findings that suggest the simpler the form, the higher the participation, the 2010 census form is limited to the most fundamental questions, Crockett said.

The more detailed questions asked in the past are now asked on the American Community Survey. Sent to a random sample of addresses on a monthly basis, the American Community Survey takes a more detailed look at what America wants and needs, Crockett said.

The American census was first conducted in 1790, and was the first census in history used to empower the people. It is repeated every 10 years.

For more information on the 2010 census, visit www.census.gov. Follow the link to the 2010 page for frequently asked questions and a host of interactive activities.



Staff Sgt. Anton Phillips

Sustainment Soldiers pay tribute to fallen hero

by **1st Lt. JENNIFER DYRCZ**
18th CSSB Public Affairs

Soldiers of the 5th Maintenance Company, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, said their final farewells to Staff Sgt. Anton Ramesh Phillips during a memorial ceremony at the Grafenwoehr Chapel, Jan. 7.

“Staff Sgt. Phillips was a great leader and one of the best NCOs in the platoon,” said Spc. William Runyon from the 5th Maint. Co. “If you had a problem, he would help you immediately and work his tail off to get you an answer as fast as he could. He was a true friend, and I will miss

him. I will always keep Staff Sgt. Phillips in my heart and hope his kids know that their dad was a real hero.”

Phillips, 31, of Inglewood, Calif., was assigned to the 5th Maint. Co. since Oct. 26, 2003, and deployed to Afghanistan with the company in August last year.

He died Dec. 31 at Forward Operating Base Methar Lam, Afghanistan, while assigned to Forward Support Company G, 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Wildhorse. The circumstances surrounding his death are under investigation.

His military schooling and education included Track Vehicle Repair Mechanic, Hazardous

Material, Warrior Leaders’ Course, Combatives Level 1 and the Army Combat Lifesaver Course.

His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Army Vehicle Driver Badge and the Mechanic’s Badge.

Phillips had two prior deployments, one to Afghanistan and one to Iraq.

He is survived by his wife and three daughters.

Citizens must file report of foreign accounts

The second in a four-part series on tips and techniques for properly preparing this year’s taxes

by **DENVER MAKLE**
JMTC Public Affairs

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service wants U.S. citizens living and working overseas to know they must file a “Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts” form with the Treasury Department by June 30 if the aggregate value of their foreign accounts exceeded \$10,000 at any time during the previous calendar year.

According to the IRS Web site, “a foreign country” includes all geographical areas outside the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States (including Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

“Filing the form, called a TD F 90-22.1, assists the Treasury Department in keeping tabs on money laundering and related banking activities,” said Brad Huestis, chief of Client Services Division at the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command Office of the Staff Judge Advocate. “The form is not a tax form and should not be included with IRS income tax returns.”

The IRS assists the Treasury Department in cracking down on taxpayers who fail to file the form, and there are civil and criminal penalties for

failure to file, said Huestis. “Accounts held in military banking facilities such as Community Bank or on-base credit unions are not considered ‘foreign bank accounts’ for the purpose of filing.”

However, Huestis said it is important because some families have purchased homes here in Bavaria, which requires them to bank on the economy.

For example, Americans might have a Postbank or Sparkasse account to pay a home mortgage or to pay local bills. Given the exchange rate, having 6,800 euros in a German account or in multiple German accounts, would be enough to trigger the requirement to file

a TD F 90-22.1. The filing requirement exists even if the amounts deposited into the accounts do not generate any additional income, such as interest.

Additionally, if a person has a foreign bank account that does not exceed \$10,000 at any time during the year they do not need to file the TD F 90-22.1. Instead, they would simply check an appropriate box on Form 1040 Schedule B of their tax return, which satisfies their reporting obligation.

The form is available at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f90221.pdf. Once completed, the form should be mailed to the U.S. Department of Treasury,

P.O. Box 32621, Detroit, MI 48232-0621.

The eight-page form includes three pages of detailed instructions. After reviewing the instructions, if you have questions about the requirement to file, contact your local tax center or legal assistance office. The 7th Army JMTC tax centers will open Feb. 1, and tax preparers can help.

Tax center professionals are available in Ansbach, Illesheim, Bamberg, Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Schweinfurt and Vilseck to assist military I.D. cardholders with questions. Information on locations

and phone numbers for each is available at www.hqjmtc.army.mil/Organization/Special_Personal_Staff/Staff_SJA/Staff_SJA_TaxOffice.html.

The 7th Army JMTC tax centers offer free federal and state income tax preparation and e-filing. For more information on the Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts, visit www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=210244,00.html#FR1

Editor’s Note: Tracy Cooklin, JMTC tax center coordinator, and Brad Huestis, chief of client services division at the JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, contributed reporting.

Tax Centers

Ansbach/Katterbach Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments Katterbach Kaserne, Bldg. 5817 (Law Center); DSN 467-2324; CIV 09802-83-2324	Bamberg Hours: M - F: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments Sat: 9-11 a.m., appointments only (only in February) Warner Barracks, Bldg. 7000 (Law Center), 4th Floor; DSN 469-8261/2, CIV 09513-00-8262	M: 10 a.m.-6 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments Grafenwoehr Training Area, Bldg. 216, 2nd floor; DSN 475-9258, CIV 09641-83-9258	Schweinfurt Hours: M-F: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Conn Barracks, Bldg. 1 (Law Center); DSN 353-8286, CIV 09721-96-8286
Ansbach/Illesheim Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments Stork Barracks, Bldg. 6506 (Law Center); DSN 467-4511, CIV 09841-83-4511	Garmisch By appointment only via Hohenfels Tax Center	Hohenfels Hours: M/W/F: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments T/Th: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments 1st Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-noon, appointment only Hohenfels Training Area, Bldg. 313 (Law Center); DSN 466-2836, CIV 09472-83-2836	Vilseck Hours: M/W/F: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments T/Th: 9 a.m.-6 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments Rose Barracks, Bldg. 245 (Law Center), 1st Floor; DSN 476-2714, CIV 09662-83-2714

DoD trains thousands to help millions register to vote

*Federal Voting Assistance Program
Press Release*

The Department of Defense’s Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) kicked off its training program geared to help voting assistance officers at military bases worldwide at a 2010 Election Year press conference, Jan. 7.

Thousands of voting assistance officers will help an estimated six million uniformed and overseas citizens vote absentee. Department of Defense and Department of State directives require a voting assistance officer at the unit level and at every embassy and consulate to facilitate this effort.

“Our goal is to bring the military and overseas citizen absentee voting success rate to that of the general public,” said Bob Carey, federal voting assistance program director. “We cannot do this if we do not address each part of the process. Registration and ballot request by using the federal post card application is critical to our citizens.”

During the kickoff press conference Carey focused on: VAO’s providing a federal post card application to all military personnel by Jan. 15 and the timely completion of registration and ballot request.

VAOs, who are required to attend a workshop, should visit www.FVAP.gov for the workshop schedule by installation. Because the law has changed dramatically since last year, voters need to be aware that they will no longer automatically receive ballots from absentee ballot applications submitted in previous years. Military voters should submit a new federal post card application every year, and every time they move, deploy, or redeploy overseas. Overseas civilian voters should submit an application before every federal election. Also, military and overseas voters should only use the Federal Post Card Application (available from Voting Assistance Officers and at www.FVAP.gov) and not state registration and absentee ballot application forms; the FPCA provides specific federal rights and guarantees that the state forms do not. Voters should use the www.FVAP.gov Web site and check the Voting Assistance Guide to make sure they use the correct forms and check the Web site to learn about the launch of new online tools that will assist uniformed service members and overseas civilians vote absentee.

Carey also discussed the importance of meeting the FPCA deadlines and accounting for mail delays throughout the voting process.

Visit the FVAP at www.fvap.gov.



Military voters should submit a new federal post card application every year, and every time they move, deploy, or redeploy overseas. Voters can find this information and more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program’s Web site, www.fvap.gov.

Courtesy photo



Bee prepared

These students know the name of Africa’s most populous city, in which state you would not find grizzly bears and the name of the continent on which the Carpathian and Balkan mountains could be found.

From nearly 200 students, these 16 were selected to compete in Netزابerg Elementary School’s very first Geography Bee.

In the end, it came down to two students, tied for the title of Geography Bee champion. Fourth-grader Angelea Lance and fifth-grader Owen Dean were asked the tiebreaker question.

Dean knew Ohio was the state bordered by Lake Erie and Kentucky. Congratulations to Dean (holding the globe), Netزابerg Elementary School’s first Geography Bee champion. Owen went on to compete to represent the Department of Defense schools in the National Geographic State Level competition, Jan 28.

Photo by Rhoda Wilner

New rules change U.S. Army Europe license plates in Germany

by **ROBERT SZOSTEK**
*USAREUR Office of the Provost Marshal
Public Affairs*

MANNHEIM, Germany - A change in German vehicle registration procedures will alter the look of U.S. Army Europe license plates in Germany beginning this month, U.S.

Army Europe Office of the Provost Marshal officials announced.

Drivers who register new vehicles will receive a set of USAREUR plates without a decal on the front plate. When vehicles are re-registered, inspectors or registration personnel will remove the front license plate decal and replace it with plain white

filler.

The reason for the change is that on Jan. 1 the German government stopped using the so-called “AU emissions decal” that was placed on the front license plate of vehicles in Germany to indicate that the vehicle had passed an emissions test. Those emissions tests will now be performed at the same

time as regular safety inspections, and so the decal has become obsolete.

Office of the Provost Marshal officials stress that vehicle owners should not remove any decals themselves. The front and back decals are color-coded according to the year the vehicle needs to be re-inspected. A missing front decal on a vehicle that

has an older registration could result in its driver being stopped by German police to check that the vehicle’s registration is in order.

The front decals for USAREUR vehicles were only used to make the plate look the same as a German plate and were not linked to any emissions test.

Distance learning facilities enhance training

by **DENVER MAKLE**
JMTC Public Affairs

At the start of this fiscal year, Oct. 1, many NCOs expecting to attend the Advance Leaders Common Core (ALC), formerly called Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course (BNCOC), phase 1, received notification that the course would be offered online, said Master Sgt. Tony Eubanks, operations officer at the Combined Arms Training Center (CATC) in Vilseck, Germany. In the past, the common core training was conducted via video teletraining. The new ALC is now required to be completed online. Eubanks said units may assist Soldiers by allowing them time during the duty-day to complete the online training at one of 35 classrooms in 12 locations throughout Europe.

The Army's Distributed Learning System allows Soldiers to receive institutional training at home station. Here in Europe, classrooms are equipped with 16 multimedia computer workstations, projectors and screens, internet access and video teletraining with two-way audio and video. Walk-in students are welcome.

"Distance Learning facilities are available to anyone who wants to use them, as long as there is an open room," said Eubanks. Students can take military courses and courses for college credit hours."

The chief of staff of the Army authorized the development of a Structured Self-Development Program (SSD) for NCOs, Sept. 15, 2007; this program requires Soldiers to complete up to



Photo by Jose Rodriguez

Sgt. 1st Class Gary McCloud of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 421 Multifunctional Medical Battalion, follows along as Master Sgt. Laferral Stewart teaches Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course via video teleconference from the Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

80 hours of distributed learning instruction.

"The objective of Distributed Learning (DL) is to bring training to Soldiers anywhere

Helena D'Amario, chief of the Distributed Learning Branch at the 7th Army Combined Arms Training Center in Vilseck, Germany. "About 900 courses have been converted to online DL courses."

According to the Army's 2009 posture statement, recent changes to the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) provides NCOs flexibility to attend and complete training at more convenient times and locations. It also allows NCOs to complete SSD while deployed.

On the Web site ArmyStudyGuide.com, a Soldier stationed in Fort Eustis, Va., said the self-paced training was worthwhile. There were five modules to complete, with established benchmarks to ensure the Soldiers meet the deadline for completion.

Eubanks said Soldiers should complete the training in about 90 days to ensure he or she is eligible for the next level of training and promotion.

According to an article in Infantry Magazine dated Sept. 1, 2008, the Army realized the Soldiers completing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan come back more highly skilled, which expedited a transformation of the NCOES.

"It's up to the Soldier to complete the training," said Eubanks. "I just want them to know we have the facilities available."

For more information on scheduling time at a DL facility in Europe, contact Helena D'Amario at the 7th Army Combined Arms Training Center at DSN 476-2378.

Graco recalls strollers due to hazards

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Press Release

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with Graco Children's Products Inc., of Atlanta, Ga., announced a voluntary recall of about 1.5 million strollers under the names Graco's Passage, Alano and Spree Strollers and Travel Systems. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

The hinges on the stroller's canopy pose a fingertip amputation and

laceration hazard to the child when the consumer is opening or closing the canopy.

Graco has received seven reports of children placing their fingers in the stroller's canopy hinge mechanism while the canopy was being opened or closed, resulting in five fingertip amputations and two fingertip lacerations.

Graco manufactured two different styles of hinge mechanisms for these stroller models. Only strollers or travel systems with a plastic, jointed hinge mechanism that has indented canopy

positioning notches are included in this recall.

The recalled strollers were manufactured between October 2004 and February 2008. The model number and manufacture date are located on the lower inside portion of the rear frame, just above the rear wheels.

Strollers were sold at AAFES, Burlington Coat Factory, Babies "R" Us, Toys "R" Us, Kmart, Fred Meyer, Meijers, Navy Exchange, Sears, Target, Walmart and other retailers nationwide from October 2004 and December 2009 for between \$80 and

\$90 for the strollers and between \$150 and \$200 for the travel systems.

Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled strollers and contact Graco to receive a free protective cover repair kit.

For additional information, contact Graco at (800) 345-4109 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's Web site at www.gracobaby.com

To see this recall on CPSC's Web site, including pictures of the recalled products, visit www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml10/10115.html.



This recall involves Graco Passage, Alano and Spree Strollers and Travel Systems with the following model numbers and specific hinge mechanisms - model numbers:

6303MYC, 6303MYC3, 7240DNB, 7240DNB2, 7240MKL2, 7240MKL3, 7F02GLM3, 6320IVY, 6320LAU, 7241DDH2, 7241DHO3, 7F04TAY3, 6330CAP, 6330THR, 6330THR3, 7255CLP, 7255CLP2,	7255CRA2, 7255CRA3, 7255CSA3, 7255GPK3, 7255GRN, 7255GRN2, 7255JJB3, 7255ORC2, 7255WLO2, 7255WLO3, 7F07EMA3, 6F00QIN3, 6F00RRY3, 7256CLO2, 7256SPM2, 7256SPM3, 7F08DSW3, 7F08LAN3,	6F03GLN3, 7260BAN, 7260BAN2, 7260BAN3, 7260MRA2, 7260MRA3, 7260PKR, 7260PKR2, 7G00DLS3, 7G00DLS4, 6G10CSE3, 7270BIA, 7270BIA2, 7G01CRL3, 7235GGA, 7235GGA2,	7E01JON2, 7E01JON3, 7G04KRA3, 7236CDR2, 7F00LPE3, 7F00RSH3, 7G05GPR3, 7G06WSR3, 7237HOL2, 7237HOL3, 7F01FOR3, 7G07ABB3, 7G07BAT3
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Spotlight on Education



Name: Phyllis Keely

What is your position at school? I've taught every grade from first through eighth here in Garmisch, but right now I teach first grade, all subjects.

Hometown: I should probably say Garmisch by now, but my home of record is Binghamton, N.Y.

How long have you been a teacher? This is my 37th year. But it seems like about seven.

What do you enjoy most about teaching? I never feel like my job is meaningless. It's definitely never boring. I learn something new every day - even (or especially) from first-graders. It's a trip when I still hear from students I taught 10, 20 or even 30 years ago.

What advice can you give students to help them succeed? Nothing ventured, nothing gained ... so go for it!

Youth Web-based science competition requests support

ECybermission Volunteer Program Press Release

WASHINGTON - The Army is looking for volunteers with a background or interest in science, technology, engineering, math or education to virtually judge a nationwide competition open to students in the sixth through ninth grades.

Now in its eighth year, eCybermission is a free, Web-based, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competition that allows students to work together to solve a problem in their community while using the scientific method.

Virtual Judges are responsible for scoring student project submissions, known as Mission Folders, on the eCybermission Web site. Virtual Judge registration is open through Feb. 26, at www.ecybermission.com.

Michael Lombardi, Research, Development and Engineering Command Program Manager for eCybermission, urges Americans to serve their country by registering to volunteer.

"America's future competitiveness and national security rests partly on our leadership in STEM education. Virtual judges for eCybermission are in a position to promote these important skills among our next generation of leaders."

Virtual judges have diverse backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, math or education disciplines, and work in the academic,



The U.S. Army's E-Cybermission program combines science, technology, engineering and math and applies them to solving community issues in the form of a competition. According to the program, judges help promote science and community problem solving in the real world to future generations.

private industry, government and nonprofit sectors. They are of vital importance to the success of eCybermission, and choose to volunteer because they:

- Believe promoting STEM education to America's youth is important to our nation's continued global competitiveness;
- Enjoy supporting and volunteering for an education-related community service activity;
- Want to contribute their expertise in a fun and unique way to the next generation of America's leaders;
- Are interested in discovering how today's students learn and apply math, science and technology in a school setting; and
- Enjoy the flexibility of volunteering online at their convenience during the regional and alternate

judging periods, from March 1-29.

Virtual judges get to experience firsthand the scientific talent and passion of students nationwide. eCybermission gives students from all backgrounds a chance to compete and win up to \$8,000 in U.S. EE savings bonds, and virtual judges have the opportunity to determine the winners based on their Mission Folder submissions.

Since the competition's inception in 2002, the U.S. Army has awarded more than \$6.7 million in prize money, and over 58,000 students have participated.

Prospective virtual judges can learn more and register to volunteer at www.ecybermission.com using the code ARMY.

For more, call 1-866-GO-CYBER (462-9237) or e-mail volunteerprogram@ecybermission.com.

Marksmanship program could go Armywide

Realistic rifle training preps Soldiers for war

Story and photo by
VINCE LITTLE
Army News Service

FORT BENNING, Ga. - An advanced rifle marksmanship concept developed at Fort Benning based on "lessons learned" in Iraq and Afghanistan might be instituted across all Army training centers later this year, officials said.

Col. Terry Sellers, operations officer for the Maneuver Center of Excellence, said Combat Familiarization Fire, or ARM 6, has not been formally added to the Army program of instruction, but that could happen around May as part of an overall POI review. New lesson plans are being drafted for the marksmanship field manual to include the CFF version standardized here.

"Some leaders have been taking different variations of this initiative and philosophy to operational units elsewhere for the past year-and-a-half," he said. "The goal is to make it one standard for all the training centers ... A lot of people want to help make the strategy better, but we're making sure the formal lesson plans match what's being done."

CFF is the culmination of a Soldier's marksmanship training from basic to advanced, said Capt. Ron Reed, the 198th Infantry Brigade's operations officer. For about a year, it's been taught to infantry Soldiers in one-station unit training and basic training with the 198th and 192nd Infantry brigades.

"It was implemented in response



Pvt. Bryce Boyer of D Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment, takes part in combat familiarization training at Fort Benning, Ga., Jan. 12.

to lessons learned in theater," Reed said. "It's intended to give a realistic experience for a Soldier deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan ... (Soldiers) learn the fundamentals and apply them. They are thinking about their next firing position, how many rounds they have to fire and time management under the stress factor of a full-combat load. Plus, the training factors in the weapon malfunction."

Within the program, Soldiers fire

from behind barriers at pop-up targets 50 to 300 meters away, Reed said. They have 30 rounds, and a dummy round is inserted into each of the three magazines to simulate a malfunction. Shooters must hit 16 of 26 targets.

In normal rifle qualification, Soldiers fire from a known distance in various predetermined positions. During CFF, they qualify in full combat gear using the barriers to move to and from different points.

The Soldiers also choose the position - prone, kneeling, sitting or standing - they want to fire from based on where the target appears.

Before CFF's inception, basic trainees and infantry OSUT Soldiers were not exposed to advanced rifle marksmanship, said Staff Sgt. Adolfo Adame, a drill sergeant with D Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment, which recently completed the training. They only had to go

through M-4 qualifications.

"This style is much better because it's what they'll see in an urban environment like Afghanistan or Iraq," Adame said. "It's going to take more than one round to take down an individual that's coming at them or shooting at them ... Now, you got a thinking Soldier on the ground who understands, 'I need some kind of cover to engage the enemy and not just stand out in the open and get hit.'"

Pvt. Brian Jackson of D Company said CFF was beneficial as he learned about the firing tactics used in combat.

"The drill sergeants are giving us a lot of knowledge about their experiences overseas. What we're doing here is what it's like ... so I feel I'll be prepared when I leave," he said.

"The other firing experiences we had were getting us used to the weapons. Here, you're actually having to take cover and pop up, with targets coming back up after firing."

Sellers said CFF emphasizes improvisation while building agile, adaptable, flexible Soldiers. The strategy speeds their development ahead of a combat deployment by mixing complexities with existing standards, he said.

"We got feedback from the field in Iraq and Afghanistan that the training centers needed to do a better job training Soldiers so they can integrate immediately upon arrival and have some idea of what they'll see in a combat environment," Sellers said. "We're now getting benefits from the confidence and competence of these kids being able to use their weapons more effectively."

Editor's Note: Vince Little writes for the Fort Benning Bayonet.

Pay, medical, family issues highlight budget request

by **DONNA MILES**
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Recognizing the nation's responsibility to support its men and women in uniform and their families, President Barack Obama will request increased funding for military pay, housing allowances, family support programs and care for wounded warriors, White House officials said Jan. 26.

The budget request, expected to be released Feb. 1, will include a 1.4 percent basic pay raise officials say is designed to keep military pay increases in line with those in the private sector. The request also will include an average housing allowance increase of 4.2 percent, as well as a variety of enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses and monthly payments for specialty skills.

Family support programs will grow 3 percent if Congress approves the request - to \$8.8 billion - to support the family members who officials credit with providing the strength and stability on which the uniformed force relies.

The request will include \$1.3 billion to make affordable, high-quality child care services more available at 800 military child development centers stateside and overseas. This represents an \$87 million increase over fiscal 2010 funding levels, officials noted.

Expanded counseling and assistance services to be funded in the new budget will help families meet the challenges of repeated deployments and family separations, officials noted. The president will request \$1.9 billion for these services, which range from financial counseling to transition and relocation assistance, up \$37 million from fiscal 2010 funding.

In addition, the request will include \$84 million for enhanced career and educational opportunities for military spouses through tuition assistance and federal internship programs. This represents a \$12 million increase over current funding.

Another provision in the request will provide \$439 million to build 10 new Department of Defense Education Activity schools. This is the first step in a Defense Department plan to replace or renovate 103 of the schools by 2015, providing military children what officials called "the world-class education they deserve," offered in "world-class facilities."

The budget request also will fund more employment and job training for military spouses and veterans, officials noted. It provides \$262 million for the Labor Department's Veterans Employment and Training Service, up \$6 million from fiscal 2010 levels. This includes \$5 million for a new initiative to help homeless women veterans and homeless families.

The budget request also seeks to expand veterans' access to medical care, officials noted. Obama will

request \$50.6 billion in advance appropriations for the VA medical care program to ensure veterans' care isn't interrupted due to budget delays. The goal, officials explained, is to ensure VA has timely, predictable funding from year to year, so veterans can rely on the quality and accessibility of the care they receive through VA.

For the first time, highly disabled veterans who are medically retired from the military will be eligible to receive both VA disability benefits and military retirement benefits. By 2015, all medically retired service members will be eligible to receive concurrent benefits, officials said.

Another measure in the request funds technology to improve the timely, high-quality delivery of health care and benefits, officials said. The Defense Department and VA are implementing the Joint Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record - essentially an electronic medical record that will follow a service member from initial enlistment through retirement or separation and transition to the VA system.

The request also includes more than \$200 million in automated processing to directly improve both the accuracy and timeliness of the delivery of veterans benefits - particularly disability compensation and the new Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit, officials said.

Speaking to military spouses today at the Joint Armed Forces Officers' Wives Club at Bolling Air Force Base here, First Lady Michelle Obama said the budget request represents a shared interest among administration officials, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Joint Chiefs Chairman Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, and the entire military chain of command to take care of service members and their families.

"The quality of the lives of our military and their families means a great deal, because in the history of our all-volunteer forces, we've never asked so much of so few," she said. "We've seen the huge burden of eight years of war on our troops - tour after tour, year after year, missing out on moments that every parent treasures: a baby's first steps, the first words, the day the training wheels come off the bike, birthdays, anniversaries."

Obama said she's been inspired by the spirit of the men and women in uniform and the families who stand with them as they serve the nation.

"All of you - our troops and families - you do your duty, and you do it without complaint," she said. "You give your all and ask very little in return -- only that we back you up so our troops can do their job."

"That's why my husband and his administration have worked to do right by our armed forces and their families," she said, "to be there for you like you have been there for us, to lighten your load as all of you have lightened ours."

Slice of life



Photo by Molly Hayden

Second Lt. Mark Osmack sinks his teeth into the latest cuisine to join the Grafenwoehr Main Post PX food court as 1st Lt. Konrad Sierszen looks on. The latest addition, "The Hut" by Pizza Hut, started serving the military community, Jan. 15, and celebrated its grand opening, Jan. 25, with numerous giveaways and tasty samples.

Fundamental for the whole family



Photo by Kristie Mashburn

Heidi Clary, a parent volunteer, reads to students through her puppet, Lata, as fourth-grader Amanda Greenley assists, during Netaberg Elementary School's Family Reading Night, Jan. 22.

More than 350 pajama-clad children cuddled up with their parents as guest readers lined the main floor of the school. Teachers made muffins and hot chocolate, making the enchanting event even more memorable for the school community.

Warrior describes her experiences with PTSD

Story and photo by
ELAINE WILSON
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - When Staff Sgt. Megan Krause returned home from a deployment in Iraq in 2006, she thought the scariest moments of her life were over.

At her homecoming, “I ran to my mother in that hangar; we both cried tears of joy,” said Krause, now an Army Reserve medic attached to a combat engineering unit in Pennsylvania. “I told her it was over and I was fine.”
“Boy, was I wrong.”

Krause later found herself waging a terrifying war with post-traumatic stress disorder. She described the battle and her road to recovery Jan. 11 during the Real Warriors Campaign session at the 2010 Suicide Prevention Conference sponsored by the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

Krause said she hit rock bottom while a student at Penn State University about two years after her deployment.

“It was when I found myself face down in the mud pit, in the middle of a pigpen in State College, Pa., running from the insurgents that I thought were chasing me, that I realized I had not yet survived,” Krause said. “I might not have been having suicidal ideations, but I was well on my way to killing myself.”

Krause said she drank a bottle of red wine every night just to get to sleep.

“It’s scary because you know you party harder than the average college kid and then get behind the wheel of your car because you just don’t care anymore,” she said. “It’s scary because you know you’re not going to class or work and you’re throwing your life away.”
“And you don’t know how to stop the cycle.”

“It was when I found myself face down in the mud pit, in the middle of a pigpen in State College, Pa., running from insurgents that I thought were chasing me, that I realized I had not yet survived.”

Staff Sgt. Megan Krause,
on her experiences with PTSD

Her nights, she said, were filled with nightmares of explosions and friends she couldn’t save in time.

“I didn’t want to die, but I wasn’t leaving myself with many other options - until I asked for help,” she said.

Help came in abundance, she said. “My [Reserve] unit wanted nothing more than to help me. They encouraged me to talk to the VA, talk to them.” Her first sergeant admitted he, too, was seeking help for post-traumatic stress and told Krause it was the best decision he ever made.

“His words were ringing in my head that scary night as I rolled over [in bed] and called [the VA] for help,” she said. “I knew I couldn’t keep going down the path I had chosen.” Two “battle buddies” showed up at 3 a.m. to drive her to the hospital.

Through the VA, Krause found the help she needed and, despite her initial embarrassment, “I discovered there was no shame in admitting that I was in trouble and needed help,” she said.

“In fact, I earned more respect for seeking help and facing my problems head-on than I ever had while failing to be the [noncommissioned officer] I wanted to be.”

Wanting to help others waging similar psychological battles, Krause volunteered to share her story through the Real Warriors Campaign.

This initiative, launched by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, features stories of service members who have sought treatment and continue to maintain successful military or civilian careers, according to the campaign’s Web site. These efforts are aimed at combating the stigma associated with seeking psychological health care and treatment.

Krause appears in several public service announcements on the campaign’s site at

realwarriors.net. The response to her coming forth with her story has been amazing, she said.

A short time ago, Krause said she received a late-night call from a college friend, also a veteran, who had seen her PSA.

He “was driving his Mustang down the back roads of Pennsylvania at 70 mph, drunk, willing himself to turn into a tree,” she said, fighting back tears.

Her friend was the same “battle buddy” who had driven her to the hospital a year prior, “and now he needed a return favor.”

He asked her to tell him her story and she poured forth every detail -- the sleepless nights, drinking, terror, stress and that “moment of clarity, all the while begging him to pull over to the side of the road.”

He did pull over and, like Krause, sought help for his post-traumatic stress.

“He said, ‘Promise me you will keep doing what you’re doing because there are people out there who need to hear it,’” she said.

Krause encouraged conference attendees to use the Real Warriors site, which includes links to resources, a live chat room, and information about the Defense Centers of Excellence Outreach Center, a 24/7 call center staffed by health resource consultants. The Outreach Center can be reached toll-free at 866-966-1020 or via e-mail at resources@dcoeoutreach.org.

Krause said coming forth takes courage, but it’s well worth the effort.

“Our stories need to be shared with anyone who has struggled or may struggle in the future, so they too can win this terrifying battle,” she said.

“I’m winning the battle with PTSD and you can too.”



Jill Herzog, of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, comforts Staff Sgt. Megan Krause after Krause’s speech about her battle with post-traumatic stress disorder. Krause spoke during the 2010 Suicide Prevention Conference sponsored by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, D.C., Jan. 11.

Army programs to battle increase in suicides

by **C. TODD LOPEZ**
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - Statistics for December suicides in the Army released Jan. 15 show as many as 10 potential suicides amongst active duty Soldiers.

The December numbers bring total active duty Army suicides for 2009 to a potential 160, up from 140 in 2008 -- a 14 percent increase. But for now, 46 of last year’s potential suicides are still under investigation.

Increases in Soldier suicides have driven efforts in the Army to get a handle on why suicides are occurring and how they can be stopped.

During the 2010 Department of Defense/Veterans Administration Suicide Prevention Conference in Washington, D.C., Walter Morales, the Army suicide prevention program manager, said during 2009 the Army’s greatest effort was in getting various service organizations to work together

toward the shared goal of combating suicide.

“I think the most important thing that we have done for the entire Army is to synchronize our efforts,” he said. “There’s a lot of people doing a lot of great things all over the place, but the mere fact that we said: let’s have a group of experts at Army level to synchronize and integrate every single service policy and program out there, I think has paid great dividends.”

The Army Suicide Prevention Program, headed by Morales, is part of the Army Suicide Prevention Task Force, which stood up in March 2009. Having existed only 10 months, Morales said it’s still too early yet to tell if Army efforts are successful.

“As we evaluate this and continue to push those services, those programs and policies down the line, I am confident we will see the effects of the great efforts of the Army team,” he said.

The biggest challenge to combating

suicide, Morales said, is combating the “stigma” that keeps Soldiers from seeking the kind of professional assistance that could help them deal with the problems that lead to suicide.

“Stigma, it is a high-level issue for the secretary of the Army on down,” he said. “We have to nail it. I know stigma has been with all the services for hundreds of years. We are not going to turn this on a dime, but we are turning every rock, if you will, to see how we can eliminate the stigma for our Soldiers.”

For Soldiers, the stigma against seeking help for mental health issues -- help that could prevent Soldiers from choosing suicide as an option -- stems from two issues.

First, there is the perception that seeking mental health assistance or having evidence of mental health treatment in their records, could affect promotions or job opportunities. This is especially true for Soldiers with jobs requiring a security clearance,

Morales said.

In the past, one particular question on security clearance application SF-86 led some to believe that having participated in mental health counseling could affect their clearance. Today, “question 21” has been changed to make it clear that having mental help assistance doesn’t necessarily affect a Soldier’s ability to get a clearance, Morales said.

“Information about normal grief and family counseling does not need to be provided in the questionnaire,” Morales said.

A second contributor to the stigma against seeking mental health is the perception that seeking mental health assistance is a sign of weakness.

“The Soldiers feel a lack of worthiness if they go out and say they need help,” Morales said. “We need to approach that with the leadership to make sure that the culture is such that it promotes the person to come out and be open about it.”

In only 10 months of work, Morales told those at the suicide prevention conference, the Army has done much to achieve its goal of reducing Soldier suicide. He said a lot of work was put into revising Army Regulations 600-63, health promotion and DA PAM 600-24, health promotion, risk reduction and suicide prevention.

Also, he said, the Army developed two videos, “Shoulder to Shoulder: No Soldier Stands Alone,” which was used in the first Army stand-down/chain teaching related to suicide, and the interactive video “Beyond the Front.” The Army is also working on a new video, “Home Front,” which deals with issues that affect Soldiers who are not deployed.

“Our ultimate goal is to eliminate suicide in the service, but there are steps in between - so I will say we continue to work diligently with everybody that has a stake in providing resources to people, with the ultimate goal to eliminate suicides,” he said.

Increase in physical activity, balanced diet make heart healthy

by **Capt. JENNIFER WALSH**
BMEDDAC Public Affairs

Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the United States. The most common cause of heart disease is coronary artery disease, which most commonly presents itself as a heart attack. More than one million Americans were affected by this form of heart disease in 2009. The good news is that there are steps you can take to help prevent yourself from becoming a victim of heart disease.

The most common risk factors for heart disease are: high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, age, family history of heart disease and race. We know you cannot change your age, family or race, but there are many things you can do to affect the other factors. A healthy diet and lifestyle, to include increased activity, are the first steps in taking charge of your health. Many people make this harder than necessary. Remember, it is your overall diet and activity level that counts. As far as diet, there are some simple steps you can take:



With heart disease as a leading cause of death in the U.S., the importance of heart-healthy practices is emphasized.

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin. Cook them in products without extra saturated or Trans fats.

- Use fat-free or low-fat dairy products like skim or 1 percent milk.

- Reduce your intake of Trans fats. If you’re not sure, read the package’s dietary information because it will mention if a product contains Trans fats.

- Reduce your daily cholesterol intake.

- Decrease the amount of beverages you drink that contain added sugars.

- Lower your salt intake. The current recommendation is less than 2,300 mg per day.

- Control portion sizes and slow down while you eat. If you eat fast, it takes longer for your body to realize it is full. Eating slower will help prevent overeating.

- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. I know you’ve read studies that say alcohol is good for the heart, but it’s only in moderation. No more than one drink per night for women and no more than two drinks for men. Lowering your alcohol intake can also lower your blood pressure.

- Increasing your physical activity is the easiest and one of the most important things you can do to improve your heart health. It could be something as simple as going outside with the kids and playing. But remember, if you haven’t exercised recently

or if you want to start a new program, it is advised you visit with your physician and check your health status before starting.

- Last but not least, you should become familiar with the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but others can start as a very mild pain or discomfort. Here are some of the signs of a heart attack: chest discomfort such as pain, pressure, squeezing, crushing feeling or fullness; discomfort in other areas of the upper body such as your back, arms, neck, jaw or stomach; shortness of breath; cold sweat; nausea; or lightheadedness.

If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your physician or call your local emergency services. For more information about heart disease and how to prevent it, contact your local clinic to get an appointment with your physician.

Editor’s Note: Capt. Edward Walsh is the chief nurse at Katterbach Health Clinic. Information for this article was taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Visit their Web site at www.cdc.gov.

What’s Happening

Grafenwoehr/ Vilseck Briefs

Shoppette to open 24/7

The Main Post Shoppette will be open around-the-clock for a trial period, Feb. 1-28.

Results will be present to the garrison commander to see if it will be a viable benefit for the community to continue this schedule.

German-American Volksfest

The first planning meeting for the 53rd German-American Volksfest will be Feb. 6, at the Main Post Performing Arts Center, Bldg. 103, 2 p.m.

If you want to participate or support the volksfest, come to this meeting. Contact special events coordinator Neville Paschall at DSN 475-6167, CIV 09641-83-6167.

Relocation Readiness

Newcomer orientation level II: Discover your neighborhood will be held Feb. 9.

Discover your surrounding communities and see what they have to offer! Registration required, call Thursday prior to confirm pick up times for Grafenwoehr, Vilseck and Netzaberg. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Bus tour for spouses

USAG Grafenwoehr invites all newly arrived spouses to become familiar with the garrison. Join us every Wednesday on a bus tour of the Main Post and Rose Barracks. Bus departs from the In Processing Training Center, Bldg. 166, Rose Barracks, at 1 p.m. and returns at 3:30 p.m.

Gather information on community agencies, housing and recreation. The Child Development Center will provide free child care to participating spouses. For more, contact the Central Processing Facility at DSN 476-2101, CIV 09641-83-2101.

Technology Expo

The 69th Signal Battalion will host a free technology exposition called “Discover Solutions for Every Mission,” Feb. 11, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Multipurpose Center, Bldg. 134 on Rose Barracks.

Over 30 exhibitors will demonstrate the latest in technological disciplines, including: telecommunications equipment, satellite communications, network data storage, voice response translator, encryption, wireless/mobile communication, amplifiers, reusable shipping containers, green IT products, disaster recovery, voice override phones.

The exhibition is open to all military, civilian and contractor personnel.

Ladies night bowling

Every Wednesday, from 6-10 p.m., ladies bowl free at Rose Barracks.

Colored Pin Bowling is held every Friday night, from 6-11 p.m.

Feb. 14: Scotch Doubles Tournament, noon-6 p.m., \$20 entry fee

Feb. 21: President’s Day No Tap Tournament, noon-6 p.m., \$20 entry fee

The Bowling Center has party hosts available for special events planning and themed party packages for children’s birthday parties.

Call us for details, DSN 476-2576, CIV 09641-83-2576.

Book donations needed

Help a Life Scout of Troop 240 complete his Eagle Scout project.

The project includes collecting German elementary school in Amberg. Good condition books are needed from kindergarten to 5th grade reading level. Donations can be made at the drop-off box in front of the Vilseck commissary.

For larger donations needing pick-up, contact David Pippin, Scoutmaster of Troop 240 at CIV 01515821-4675 or david.pippin@eur.army.mil.

Black History month

Join USAG Grafenwoehr and JMTC at the Netzaberg Teen Center, Feb. 25 from 4-6 p.m., in this annual observance recognizing national, social, scientific and political contributions by black Americans.

Celebration to include food samples, giveaways, presentations from Elementary schools, and live performances, including the singing sounds of a Gospel group.

For more, contact Master Sgt. Brown at DSN 475-8038, CIV 09641-83-8038.

Army Family Action Plan

The Army Family Action Plan (AFAP), March 9-10, is designed to take issues from the community (Soldiers, DA civilians, retirees and family members) and provide them with a voice in shaping standards of living and identify issues related to our current quality of life.

During these two days, volunteers and faculty members will gather, analyze and transcribe data to present to the leaders who then make decisions for improvement.

Volunteer to participate or submit issues in the yellow AFAP submission boxes at various locations on Main Post and Rose Barracks, by e-mailing simone.larson@eur.army.mil , through the USAGG Web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil/cms.asp#afap, or by calling the office at DSN 476-2237, 475-2797, CIV 09662-83-2237, 09662-83-2797.

Hohenfels Briefs

AFAP volunteers needed

Members of the Hohenfels community are needed as volunteers for the upcoming 2010 Army Family Action Plan Conference at USAG Hohenfels. The AFAP Conference will be held from Feb. 17-19.

Volunteers are needed to serve as delegates, facilitators, recorders, transcribers, and conference support staff. The AFAP Conference begins at 8 a.m. each morning. Lunch and childcare is provided.

Those interested in volunteering should call Kurt Rager at DSN 466-3403, CIV 09472-83-3403 by Feb. 5.

Texas Hold’em

The multiweek tournament will be held at the Hohenfels Zone Sports Bar from 6:30 p.m. to midnight, Feb. 5. There is not a fee to play.

The garrison winner of the qualifier will go on to compete in the Armywide online finals for a chance to win the grand prize.

For more, call DSN 466-2060, CIV 09472-83-2060.

Bunco

The Hohenfels community is invited to enjoy a game of Bunco, Feb. 5. Registration fee is \$10, which includes a light buffet. Doors will open at the Zone at 5:30 p.m. and the games will be held from 6:30 p.m. to midnight.

For more, call DSN 466-2060, CIV 09472-83-2060.

Ski trip to Reit im Winkl

A one-day trip offering alpine and cross country skiing, hiking and more. The bus will depart from Hohenfels Outdoor Recreation, Feb. 6, at 5:30 a.m. and return at 8:30 p.m. The one-day trip will offer alpine and cross country skiing, hiking and more.

Cost is \$25 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under. Discounts are offered to groups of five or more and for those with season rentals. Seating is limited to the first 14 customers.

For more, call DSN 466-2060, CIV 09472-83-2060.

Shopping in Czech

The bus will first stop at the Cesa Lipska outlet where you can purchase crystal at wholesale prices. You will then go to the Dragon Marts in Cheb, Czech Republic for more shopping. The bus will depart Hohenfels Outdoor Recreation, Feb. 6, at 4 a.m. and will return at 10:30 p.m.

The cost is \$55 and price includes transportation. Passports are required. Seating is limited to the first 50 people.

For more, call DSN 466-2060, CIV 09472-83-2060.

Oberammergau getaway

Journey with Outdoor Recreation to Oberammergau, Germany, Feb. 12-14. You can relax or take part in the many winter activities offered.

The price is \$175 per person based on double occupancy and includes transportation, two nights’ accommodation and two breakfasts. Equipment rental will be available at the lodge but is not included in the total cost.

The bus will depart from Hohenfels Outdoor Recreation at 5 p.m., Feb. 12 and will return at 8:30 p.m., Feb. 14. Seating is limited to the first 14 customers.

For more, call DSN 466-2060, CIV 09472-83-2060.

Half day snowshoe hike

Enjoy a three-hour hike in the Bavarian Forest near Dreisesselberg, Feb. 20. The bus will depart from Hohenfels Outdoor Recreation at 10 a.m. and will return at 6 p.m. Cost is \$70 per person and includes transportation, equipment and tour. Seating is limited to the first 14 customers.

For more, call DSN 466-2060, CIV 09472-83-2060.

Super Bowl party at Lane 17

Enjoy Super Bowl XLIV at Lane 17 Bowling Center, beginning at 7 p.m., Feb. 7, until the end of the game. The entry fee is \$5 and bowling is \$0.44 per game.

Enter the Nine Pin, No Touch Bowl-

ing Tournament starting at 7:15 p.m. The top two bowlers will be awarded a cash prize. The Super Bowl game will be shown in its entirety.

For more, call DSN 466-4611, CIV 09472-83-4611.

Valentine’s crafts day

Fun crafts for children of all ages will be offered at the Hohenfels library from 2:30-4:30 p.m., Feb. 10.

For more, call DSN 466-1740, CIV 09472-83-1740.

Sweetheart’s night out

Start planning a date night for your valentine. Take advantage of the extended care offered by CYS from 6-11 p.m., Feb. 13.

The cost is \$20 for CDC children and \$15 for SAS age children. Register at CLEOS, located in Bldg. 10. AFC benefits apply.

For more, call DSN 466-2078, CIV 09472-83-2078.

Garmisch Briefs

Carnivale in Venice

Experience the pageantry and grandeur of Carnivale in Venice, Feb. 5-7.

View great art and architecture, the pigeons in St. Mark’s Square, gondolas, good places to eat and more.

Cost: \$290.

Prague theme tour

This will be a small group — no more than 16 counting two FMWR tour guides, Feb. 12-15.

Attend an opera, visit area museums, or explore the rest of Prague — as a group or on your own. Assistance for those who want opera tickets is available.

This is going to be a great weekend because of the unique performances and exhibitions. Cost: \$290.

Munich & Third Reich

Join us Feb. 26 & 28. Start with a video presentation and a geographical and historical orientation in the Pete Burke Community Center, Friday evening, Feb. 26, at 7 p.m.

Then, Sunday, Feb. 28, we meet at the Garmisch train station just before 8 a.m. to travel to Munich, recount the Bier Hall Putsch as it happened in 1923, have lunch and visit the site of the Munich Accords. Cost: \$35.

Museum serves British ales

Come sample seven different British ales ranging from the lightest India Pale Ale to the deepest, darkest chocolate

stout, Feb. 27, with Dr. Christoph Pinzl, director of the German Hops Museum.

Sign-up cutoff is Feb. 12. Cost includes transportation, admittance to English-guided tour of museum and tasting of handpicked ales included. Cost: \$55.

Pool & Gorge – Feb. 27

Visit the Partnachklamm, one of the most beautiful natural attractions in Germany.

Hear about the 1936 Olympics in Garmisch at the ski jumping stadium, and then finish the day at the Alpspitze Wellenbad, the town’s largest swimming pool. Cost: \$22.

For more info on any of these FMWR trips, contact the Garmisch Outdoor Recreation Alpine Experts at DSN 440-2638 or CIV 08821-750-2638.

Australian Pink Floyd show

The internationally renowned Pink Floyd tribute band in their biggest show yet at the Munich Olympiahalle, March 22, will include jaw-dropping note-for-note musical excerpts from Pink Floyd’s legendary albums.

This magnificent new tour will be bigger and better than ever, featuring an amazing new stage production with more animation, more lasers and even more amazing inflatables!

Trip departs at 5:30 p.m. Cost is for FMWR transportation is \$12 — tickets available online!

Partnachklamm

Two of the most beautiful natural attractions in this area are the Partnachklamm and Alpspitze Wellenbad.

We’ll meet Saturday, Feb. 27, and talk a bit about the 1936 Olympics in Garmisch and show people the stadium where the ski jumping event took place.

After our invigorating walk through the gorge, we’ll visit the Alpspitze Wellenbad, which is the town’s largest swimming pool.

Amsterdam for tulips

Visit Holland in the spring, April 15-18, to see the flowers. The Dutch are not only interested in flowers but also are great lovers of art and cultural things in general.

We will see Rembrandts, Vermeers and those Van Goghs that are permanently on display in Amsterdam.

There is the Anne Frank House. We will visit the Heineken Brewery and the “Lord in the Attic” museum.

Until you have seen Amsterdam in the spring, you have not lived.

For more on any of these FMWR trips, contact the Garmisch Outdoor Recreation Alpine Experts at DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638.

Father Daughter Dance

February 11
6:30-8:30 p.m.

Netzaberg Youth Center
Bldg. 9080

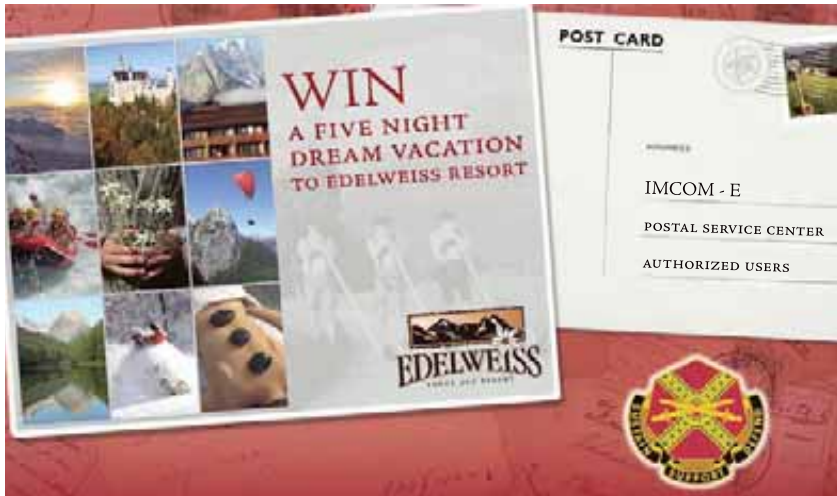
\$7 per person

Register at Parent Central Services
before **Feb. 5**



For more information contact Parent Central Services

Rose Barracks - DSN: 476-2760, CIV: 09662-83-2760
Main Post - DSN: 475-6656, CIV: 09641-83-6656



Tell IMCOM-Europe how the Postal Service Center can

better serve your mail needs by completing the online survey at:

www.milmail.org

The IMCOM-E Postal Transformation Office would like your feedback regarding the effectiveness of your local postal operations. The short survey will give you a voice to weigh in on important issues directly impacting your mail like operating days and hours, email notifications of packages and Saturday operations.

Anyone currently authorized to use postal facilities, such as Soldiers, U.S. retirees, civilian employees, contractors and their family members may take the survey. You have until February 15, 2010 to complete the short survey and be entered in the five night stay at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany.

Visit **www.milmail.org** to complete the survey and win!

To receive exclusive vacation deals via email sign up for the Edelweiss Resort Newsletter at: www.EdelweissLodgeandResort.com/edemail.html

What’s Happening

Garmisch (continued)

Opera, concerts in Munich
We are fortunate in having an opportunity to see concerts and operas in a world class setting in Munich. Tickets range in price from 132 euros down to 9 for the opera and from 53 euros down to 5 for the concert.

Naturally, it all depends on where you sit and what is still available. Sometimes we get some discounts as well. Munich has four opera houses so there are multiple ways to satisfy the urge to see live music and theatre!

- Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. – Opera: The Tragedy of the Devil
- March 2 at 8 p.m. – Concert: Richard Wagner, Ernest Bloch, Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy
- March 3 at 8 p.m. – Opera: Donizetti’s “Roberto Devereux” featuring Edita Gruberova
- April 13 at 8 p.m. – Concert: Beethoven’s First Piano Concerto and Brahms’ First symphony.

Ansbach Briefs

Debt notification
People who owe money to, or were owed money by Pfc. Michael Jarrett of D Company, 2-159 ARB, in Illesheim, should contact Chief Warrant Officer 2 Laura Clarke at DSN 467-4962, CIV 01515-234-7399.

A list of such accounts will be given to Pfc. Jarrett’s legal guardians.

Achtung — falling ice
With the freezing temperatures, there is a problem of icicle build-up. Icicles falling from the roofs are dangerous and could cause severe head or eye injuries.

Garrison safety officials recommend building coordinators and facility managers inform building occupants and customers about the danger when entering or exiting a building, and possibly put up signs at entrance doors.

Also, park vehicles away from buildings to eliminate possible damage to parked cars.

SKIES Unlimited classes!
SKIES Unlimited new catalog has information on upcoming classes for kids and youth.

Included are acting and film, culinary arts, dance, lifeguard & junior lifeguard,

and a variety of music classes.

Up to eight free SKIES classes per child for families of deployed Soldiers!

To learn more about classes, stop by Central Enrollment & Registration Office at Storck Barracks (across from Community Bank) DSN 467-4880, CIV 09841-83-4880 or Katterbach Kaserne DSN 467-2533, CIV 09802-832533.

Gift giving is easier
Americans can now give gifts to the Army.

The “Gifts to Army” Web site provides the American public with information on methods by which citizens, organizations and corporations can contribute cash or goods and services to benefit Soldiers and their families.

Cash contributions up to \$10,000 can be made online via credit card for the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs supporting Soldiers and their families or directly to a specific Army installation.

FMWR programs process general unsolicited contributions in the form of goods, services or money for use in its programs which include, but are not limited to: child care centers, youth activities, recreation centers, libraries, sports programs. One hundred percent of all contributions are used to benefit Soldiers and their families.

To make an online contribution: <http://giftstoarmy.army.mil/index.aspx>.

The garrison’s program coordinator can answer your questions regarding contributions of money or goods and services or provide assistance with making a contribution at DSN 468-7231, CIV 0981-183-7231.

Education Center hours
Soldiers separating from the Army are required to make an appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays to out-process.

Separating Soldiers must know their separation program designator code, which is obtained from the Transition Center, in order to be cleared through the Education Center.

Army Education Centers in Ansbach, Bamberg and Schweinfurt will provide limited counseling and testing services by appointment only Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Testing services will be available only on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week with testing Soldiers having priority.

College proctoring services are based on space availability and funding.

On training holidays Army Education Centers will only provide limited counseling services and will be closed on all federal holidays.

Call Katterbach Kaserne: DSN 467-2817, CIV 09802-83-2817; Storck Barracks: DSN 467-4272, CIV 09841-83-4272.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Video game tournaments
Every Saturday in February, the Ledward Library invites gamers to stop by and show of their Madden NFL 10 skills. The tournament will begin at noon. For more, call DSN 354-1740, CIV 09721-96-1740.

Schweinfurt carnival
Germany’s “Fasching” celebrations are right around the corner.

Join Ledward Library in taking a trip to the Schweinfurt Fasching parade, Feb. 16 at noon. Transportation provided.

Call to reserve a seat. For more, call DSN 354-1740, CIV 09721-96-1740.

AFAP seeks input, volunteers
The Army Family Action Plan annual conference is held Feb. 8 through 10 at the Conn Community Club and seeks your time and input.

Volunteers are sought to work as a delegate, facilitator or recorder. Contact Army Community Service at CIV 09721-96-6933 to learn more.

Have an issue that affects the total Army Family? Submit your input to the many issue boxes placed around the garrison, or visit www.schweinfurt.army.mil/sites/acs/afap/afap.htm.

Auto skills class
The Auto Skills Center on Conn Barracks offers a class on welding tomorrow from 7 to 8 p.m.

Class is free and open to all ID cardholders. No sign ups necessary.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-8224, DSN 353-8224.

Right Arm night
The entire community is invited to a Right Arm night Feb. 18 beginning at 4 p.m. at the Conn Irish Pub downstairs in the Conn Community Conference Center.

All community members are invited to socialize, sip and snack. For more, call CIV 09721-96-6186.

Cosmic bowling
Enjoy an evening of cosmic bowling at the Kessler bowling alley on Fridays and Saturdays from 8 p.m. to midnight.

Dim the lights, turn on the disco ball, and listen to the music as you bowl your best game ever.

The Kessler Bowling Center also offers Lunch n’ Bowl Tuesdays through Fridays at 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For a complete list of daily bowling activities, call DSN 354-6332, CIV 09721-83391.

Fitness classes
Keep an eye out for the many fitness classes offered by the Finney and Kessler Fitness Centers including bootcamp spinning and pilates.

Those interested can also request circuit training, fitness equipment orientation, and pre/post-natal fitness training in addition to the numerous classes held daily.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-8234 for Finney Fitness Center and CIV 09721-96-6735 for Kessler.

Community volleyball
Registration has begun for community volleyball and runs until Feb. 25. The season begins March 15 with games played on weekends at other garrisons.

The league is open to all ID cardholders over the age of 18.

For more, call DSN 353-8234, CIV 09721-96-8234.

4-on-4 volleyball tournament
Registration is open now for those interested in competing in a four-on-four volleyball tournament.

Each team will have a 16-player limit. The tournament will be held Feb. 28 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Deadline to sign up is Feb. 25.

All ID cardholders 18 years and older are invited to play.

For more, call DSN 353-8234, CIV 09721-96-8234.

Fittest male/female contest
Join other in-shape individuals for the fittest male/female contest Feb. 17 at 11 a.m. and Feb. 19 at 4 p.m.

Six challenge stations will test speed, cardiovascular power, and muscle power. All ID cardholders over the age of 18 are invited to compete.

For more, call DSN 353-8234, CIV 09721-96-8234.

President’s Day ski trip
Schweinfurt Outdoor Recreation is taking a trip to Dolomites, Italy, Feb. 12-15.

Cost is \$299 for children and adults 5 years and older and free for children 4 and under.

Transportation, three nights lodging, breakfasts, dinner, equipment rental and optional snowboarding lessons are included in price. Lift ticket costs extra. Sign up by Friday.

To sign up or for more, call CIV 09721-96-8080, DSN 353-8080.

BOSS events
The award-winning Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program offers numerous programs monthly.

Join them every Tuesday for a movie night at 6 p.m. or every Thursday for tournament night also at 6 p.m.

A BOSS meeting will be held Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. and all members are invited to attend. Events are held at the Finney Recreation Center.

For a complete list of upcoming events, call DSN 353-8476, CIV 09721-96-8476.

Super Bowl Sunday
The Finney Recreation Center will feature the Super Bowl game Sunday with a tailgate party at 4 p.m., a Madden 10 tournament, food and drinks.

For more, call DSN 353-8476, CIV 09721-96-8476.

SKIES Unlimited
The School of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills, or SKIES, offers countless opportunities for the youth of Schweinfurt to get involved, learn a new talent, or improve an old one.

Youth of all ages have options of ballet, choir, guitar, karate, horseback riding, scuba diving and much more.

For a complete list of classes or for more details, call DSN 354-6460, CIV 09721-96-6460.

Sign up for a night off
Do you need a night away from the kids to hang out with friends or relax at home?

Sign up now for the next Parent’s Night Out event which will take place Feb. 19 from 6:30-11:30 p.m. Deadline to sign up is Feb. 12.

The cost is \$16 for ages 6 weeks through fifth grade. Children must be registered with CYSS and also have current immunizations.

For more information, call central registration at DSN 354-6517, CIV 09721-96-6414.

Schweinfurt homeschoolers
Parents and children of the Schweinfurt homeschooling community are invited to attend the Schweinfurt homeschoolers meeting Feb. 9, at the Kessler Bowling Center from 1 to 3 p.m.

This is a great way for parents and children to share ideas and meet other homeschooling families in the community.

For more, call DSN 354-6057, CIV 09721-96-6057.

Youth soccer registration
Register now for youth soccer. Cost is \$25 for ages 3-5 and \$30 for ages 6-18.

Participants must have current CYS Services registration and sports physical. Deadline to sign up is Feb. 19. For more, call DSN 354-6517, CIV 09721-96-6517.

Interview 101
Come to the Interview 101 training course Feb. 16 at Army Community Service from 2 to 3 p.m.

The class provides information on how to prepare for a successful job interview including types of questions, how to answer and more.

For more, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

Stress management
Join Army Community Service for a stress management class Feb. 16, from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Yellow Ribbon Room on Ledward Barracks.

Test your stress level and identify various causes for stress.

For more, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

Checkbook management
Come to a checkbook management class Feb. 9 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Army Community Service.

The workshop covers checkbook management skills, record keeping, online banking, budget development and more.

For more, call DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.



SKIES Unlimited

- Acting & Film •
- Tae Kwon Do •
- Ballet •
- Jazz •
- Hip Hop •
- Tumbling •
- Swimming •
- Piano •
- Guitar •
- Drums •
- Keyboard •
- Horseback Riding •
- Choral Group •
- Culinary Arts •
- Rope Skipping •
- Foreign Language •

Culinary Arts

We're cooking up a storm with our new SKIES Unlimited class. We'll learn so much during these 8 weeks of fun!

11 Jan 2010-10 Mar 2010
Katterbach Ansbach Middle-High School Home Economics Room

Monday 1515-1715 7th-12th Grade
Tuesday 1515-1715 4th-6th Grade
Wednesday 1600-1800 4th-6th Grade
Thursday 1515-1715 7th-12th Grade

Instructor:
Chef Matt Dawson
Qualified Instructor

Chef Matt's passion for the kitchen began early in life while helping his dad catch trout in the mountains of Colorado, and passion for food and discovery only grew as he got older. He is a firm believer that dreaming leads to discovering, discovering to learning, and learning leads to happiness. Matt looks forward to sharing what he has learned with you!

To learn more about our classes, stop in your Central Enrollment & Registration Office (CER)
Katterbach: 09802.83 2533 | 467.2533
Storck Bks 09841.83 4880 | 467.4880

YOUTH BASEBALL, SOFTBALL & SOCCER REGISTRATION



SPORTS FOR AGES 3-18*

Soccer Registration:
Tues, Jan. 19-Fri, Feb. 19
\$25 for ages 3-5
\$30 for ages 6-18
Abbreviated season of 5 games

Softball/Baseball Registration:
Mon, Feb. 22-Fri, Mar. 26
\$25 for ages 3-5
\$46 for ages 6-18

**Participants must have current CYS Services Registration & Sports Physical.*

USAG Schweinfurt
CYSS Central Registration
Ledward Barracks, Bldg. 224
Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
09721-96-6517
DSN 354-6517



Switzerland

A wealth of opportunity



Downtown Zurich unites cultural sightseeing with modern flare and provides several options for tourists to see and experience.

Story and photos by
EMILY ATHENS
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

While living in Germany, it's necessary to take advantage of the ease at which one can drive from one country to the next. And Switzerland, a mere four-hour drive from Munich, should be on everyone's "to do" list.

Offering expansive greenery in the summer and extensive fields of untouched snow in the winter, Switzerland offers a variety of sightseeing and activities.

Though not as seamless as driving across the border in a European Union member country, drivers entering Switzerland should bring their passport, international driver's license and purchase a vignette at a gas station once they cross the border.

The vignette is simply a receipt for paying the annual motorway tax, and costs about 25 euros. Drivers should purchase a vignette, even if they are only in Switzerland for an hour, to avoid the hefty fine associated with being caught without one.

Once in Switzerland, the options are endless.

Top ski resorts span the countryside, including Zermatt, Verbier and St.

Moritz. Visitors shouldn't miss the opportunity to ski white-capped mountains with a blue sky backdrop. If the weather doesn't permit winter activities, why not take a hike along the beautiful countryside, where vast lakes are broken up by mountains that dominate the skyline.

The summertime between May and October is a hiker's paradise. Hiking tours are offered for those who appreciate organized excursions, but trails are also open to those who prefer a spontaneous venture on their own time.

Nature trails, paths, hiking routes and obvious mountaineering tracks are marked with colored signs all over Switzerland.

Off the beaten track, visitors will find there are much more opportunities to sightsee in the cities with winding streets, endless shopping and Gothic architecture. These cityscape hiking tours offer historical sites, medieval churches, castles and countryside near major towns.

Zurich remains Switzerland's largest city, popular for its arts, design and a thriving nightlife with modern shopping and trendy restaurants embedded in a picturesque old town. Tour the "altstadt" (old town) and take in the sights of

the Fraumuenster with its stained-glass windows, and the twin towers of Grossmuenster Cathedral.

Once in Zurich, tourists can take a short drive to the cities of Basel on the Rhine; Bern, the capital city, known for its traditional folk entertainment and medieval culture; and Lucerne, one of Europe's most heavily toured towns.

To the east lies Appenzell, hidden in the lush, rolling hills of Switzerland, where one can enjoy smaller villages housing ornately painted buildings, expressing the long-lived culture and traditions of Switzerland.

While there, visitors shouldn't leave without visiting the city's most famous peak, the Saentis, with a view of numerous surrounding nations.

The official currency is the Swiss franc, but the euro is accepted almost everywhere. Despite a favorable exchange rate, tourists can expect things to be expensive as the country is known for its rich tastes and extravagant prices.

All in all, whether it's the lakes and mountains of nature, or the manmade structures and architecture, Switzerland offers never-ending entertainment, beauty and enjoyment for any traveler.



The twin towers of Grossmuenster Cathedral stand watch in the "altstadt," or old city, of Zurich.



Drivers can expect to easily travel from one city to the next and take in the beauty of Switzerland, like the boats and homes on Lake Lucerne welcoming a rainbow.

SORT program simplifies recycling

Environmental, budgetary concerns propel Ansbach to use resources effeciently

by **RONALD H. TOLAND JR.**
USAG Ansbach Public Affairs

If you’re puzzled about how to properly recycle, Ansbach’s environmental division makes it easy with its SORT guide.

Separate or Recycle Trash, or SORT, is a program that saves garrison resources and recycles them back into the community in the form of programs and improvements.

Not only does the program work toward saving valuable resources, it also educates users and makes recycling easier for Ansbach community members.

Primarily geared toward youngsters, the SORT guide informs everyone how to recycle properly, say garrison environmental program managers.

“We are trying to make children aware of the fact that we are running out of resources (e.g. generating plastic products from crude oil) and therefore have to be more efficient with what our planet is providing us with. In the end, for us and for future generations, we need to take care of our planet now and this is why we recycle,” said Christian Loos, contract core compliance manager for the garrison’s environmental office.



Courtesy photo

U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach spent \$3 million in 2009 for nonrecycled trash. To become more environmentally friendly and budget conscious, garrison leaders are setting their sights to save \$400,000 by recycling in 2010.

Loos added that the purpose of the garrison’s SORT program is to apply the different laws — like the German waste law and Army regulations — for the program, as well as implement the Ansbach SORT guide, which requires all community members to separate recyclable materials from nonrecyclables.

“With this program, we are trying to increase the recycling rate, to reduce disposable waste and keep our environment nice and clean,”he said.

TF Ready opens new fuel point

by **1st. Lt. ANDREW WEMPE**
12th Combat Aviation Brigade

SHINDAND, Afghanistan – Soldiers of E Company, 5th General Support Aviation Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, pumped the first of potentially millions of gallons of fuel in support of aircraft operations throughout western Afghanistan at a brand-new Forward Arming and Refueling Point, or FARP, at Shindand Airfield, Jan. 7.

The 300,000 gallon-fuel capacity FARP, which has been named Daytona, will service aircraft not only within Task Force Ready, but also for rotary wing assets throughout Regional Command-West.

The FARP opened for business when Staff Sgt. Gregory Martin, Sgt. Troy Thomas and Sgt. Henry Lanns refueled two CH-47 Chinook aircraft belonging to the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade of Task Force Talon.

Only three weeks ago the FARP area was a barren and dangerous section of land on the northeast corner of Shindand Airfield that had not been cleared of mines or unexploded ordnance. During those three weeks, contractors and TF Ready Soldiers worked feverishly to de-mine clear, level, lay gravel and provide FARP security before the installation of fuel bags commenced. Once the six 50,000-gallon capacity fuel bags were installed and fuel testing was completed, the FARP opened to very happy customers throughout RC-West.

“The opening of FARP Daytona is instrumental to sustaining the future aviation mission sets throughout RC-West,” said 2nd Lt. James Burnham, FARP officer in charge.

The unit currently has plans to expand FARP Daytona and the Soldiers of E Co. are also preparing to assume responsibility of up to four more FARP locations throughout RC-West.



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer James Melby

A CH-47 Chinook helicopter prepares to land for the first fuel-up at a new Forward Arming and Refueling Point at Shindand Airfield in western Afghanistan. FARP Daytona was recently constructed by troops of the 5th General Support Aviation Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment.

Katterbach Clinic realigns to best meet patients’ needs

*Katterbach Health Clinic
News Release*

As a result of the significant turnover of providers in the last six months and the recent deployment of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, the Katterbach Health Clinic is undertaking Primary Care Manager (PCM) realignment. The clinic is reassigning its current patients to providers that are present in the clinic while assigning deployed Soldiers to their deployed providers.

All patients are assigned to both a PCM and a PCM Group to ensure the most continuous care possible. Groups consist of multiple PCMs of similar disciplines that can assist each other during times of temporary assignments or leave. These reassignments will ensure better continuity for patients throughout deployment.

What this means for patients, is that they may receive multiple PCM change letters from Tricare. Patients should contact the clinic leadership or the Tricare enrollment representative if they have any questions or wish to know their current PCM.

Also, effective Feb. 1, the Katterbach Health Clinic joined the ERMCCare Call Center. As many patients are aware, the clinic has had difficulties with the continual operation of its phone system, resulting in hardship for patients.

By going to the ERMCCare Call Center, the clinic hopes to alleviate these problems, thus creating a more reliable and shorter phone experience.

By calling the ERMCCare Call Center, patients will be able to make or cancel appointments, talk with a registered nurse via the Nurse Advice Line and obtain clinic-specific information. The call center will replace the appointment line in the clinic for all primary care, physical therapy and optometry appointments.

Behavioral health, EDIS and social work will continue to function as they have been. The ERMCCare Call Center is open weekdays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The number to call is toll-free 0800-914-6133, CIV 06221-17-2622 or DSN 371-2622.

As always, patients can book their own appointments through Tricare online by going to www.tricareonline.com. Tricare online is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays.

For more information on the happenings at the Katterbach Health Clinic, consult the clinic’s monthly newsletter, which is available electronically through your family readiness group, in print at the clinic’s front desk, or on the clinic’s Web site at <http://ermc.amedd.army.mil/katterbach/index.cfm>.

Emotional health as important as physical

Global Assessment Tool assesses Soldiers’ mental and emotional health

by **Staff Sgt. PATRICIA DEAL**
U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

HEIDELBERG, Germany – Now that the new year has begun, many U.S. Army Europe Soldiers are spending more time in the gym to improve their physical health. They will also need to spend some time on their computers to improve their mental and emotional health.

USAREUR Soldiers are required to complete the on-line Global Assessment Tool, or GAT, one component of the Army’s Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program that was established in October 2008 as a proactive way to help Soldiers deal with the stress of military service in an era of persistent conflict.

The GAT, an online survey developed by subject matter experts from U.S. military and civilian universities, contains a series of questions focusing on the four dimensions of emotional, spiritual, social and family fitness. The GAT was adapted from a civilian program designed for teachers that was reworked to meet the experiences and needs of the military community. It is not a diagnostic tool, but

rather a way for a person to visualize performance growth based on changes in training, experience and maturity, according to CSF program officials.

The GAT survey provides immediate results that allow Soldiers to identify their own personal strengths and weaknesses. The individual’s results are linked to Comprehensive Resilience Modules that provide tools to help that individual enhance his or her resilience skills in each of the four dimensions.

“The GAT is very important as a first step in the CSF program,” said Jessie Massey, USAREUR deputy chief of medical operations and CSF coordinator. “It gives Soldiers self-awareness as to their mental and emotional health, and offers ways to strengthen or improve areas. Soldiers will take the GAT again after a period of time so they can gauge their mental and emotional health fitness and continue training to improve their resilience.”

Currently, only Soldiers are required to take the GAT but soon family members will have the opportunity to take it, as well as Army civilian



employees, according to program officials.

“Teaching Soldiers and civilian employees is critical, but the family members represent the third leg of this strategic triangle. Any program that does not include them misses the mark by a wide margin,” Massey said.

Massey said the GAT is individualized and confidential. “The only information that commanders can see is whether or not the Soldier took the GAT. No one else can access anyone else’s results,” he said. “The GAT is designed purely for the individual’s benefit. The whole premise behind CSF is to strengthen each individual Soldier, thereby making the entire force stronger.”

Soldiers can take the Global Assessment Tool at (AKO login required): <https://www.sft.army.mil>.

For more information on the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, visit the Web site at <http://www.army.mil/csf/index.html>.

A room with a view

Housing offers improved units to families in Garmisch

Story and photos by
JOHN REESE

USAG Garmisch Public Affairs

After completion of renovation work in 2009, Garmisch now has 81 family-friendly on-post Army Family Housing quarters located in the Breitenau Housing Area on Artillery Kaserne.

"This beautiful housing area is located near the foot of the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain, and is surrounded by woods with numerous, easily accessible walking trails," said Gaby Furitsch, housing manager. "All garrison amenities are a short walking distance including the elementary-middle school and the post exchange and commissary complex."

Sheridan Kaserne, home of the George C. Marshall Center and the AFRC Edelweiss Lodge and Resort Hotel, are also located within walking distance.

Except for Senior Grade Officers Quarters (SGOQ), all of the housing units are in multiplex buildings. Garmisch has six 2-stairwell buildings and one 3-stairwell building, where two to six families share a common stairwell entrance.

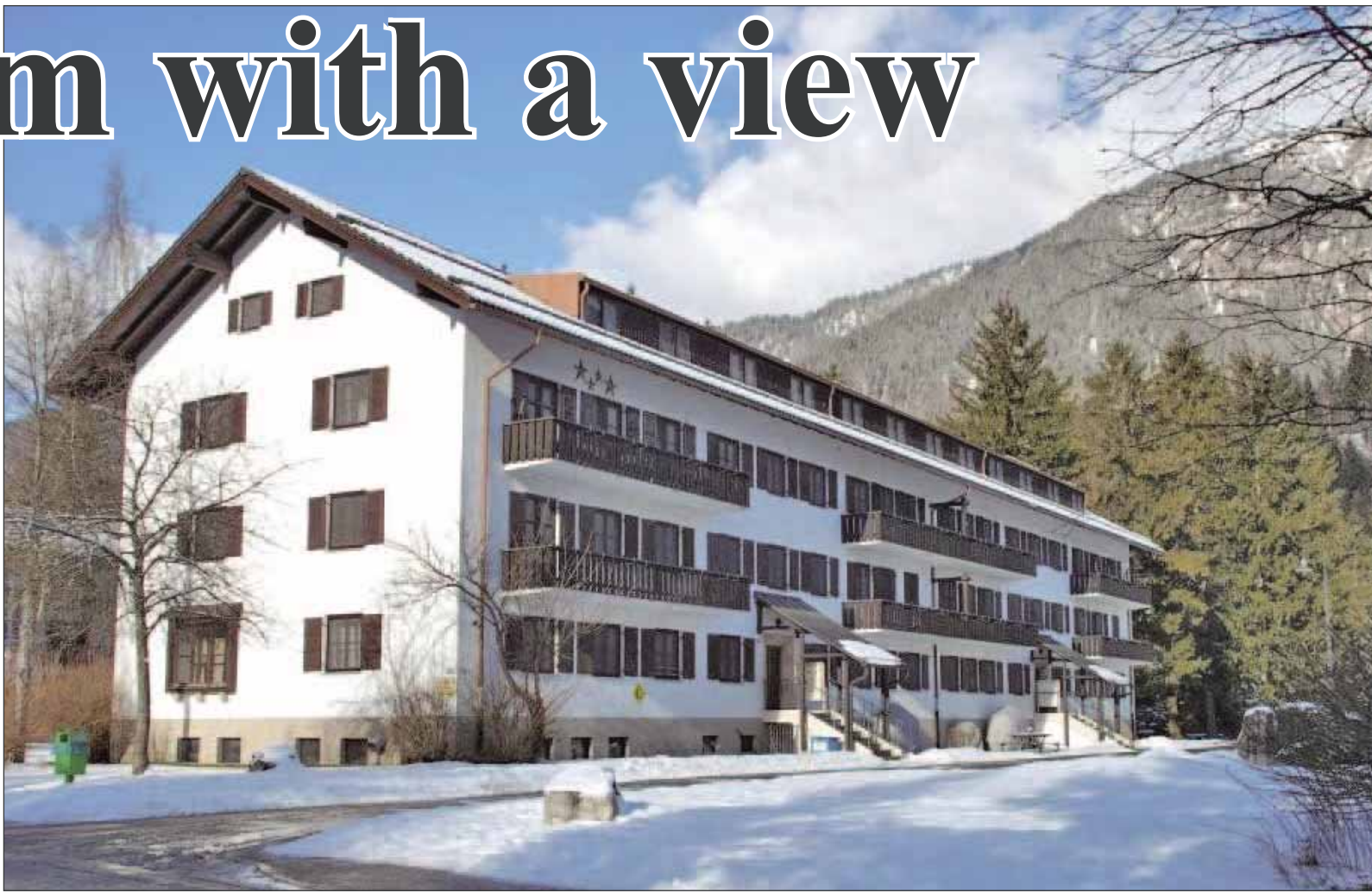
Each multiplex has a private washer and dryer in the individual apartments. Future residents owning bulky furniture or major appliances are encouraged to store them before their permanent change of station, as the stairwell units do not have elevators. Housing is unable to assign extra bedrooms or storage areas because of large pieces of furniture.

"Apartments have limited space for large furniture; for example, all bedrooms have large closets across one wall, balcony door and or windows on another, which means arranging a king-size bed, triple dresser and large chest of drawers would be difficult," said Sharon Hawkridge, housing management assistant. "Most units have a living room/dining room combination. Each unit has either a storage cage or storage room in the basement of the building and an assigned uncovered parking space."

Kitchens generally do not have room for a kitchen table; in some units there is a built-in dining counter. Waterbeds require prior approval.

"As one might expect after such a challenging and substantive renovation project, we've experienced and are currently dealing with some deficiencies which we've identified," added Hawkridge.

Furitsch said all units have beautiful hardwood parquet floors and recommended bringing area rugs. In addition residents enjoy approximately



The family-friendly refurbished stairwell units in the Breitenau Housing Area, located at the base of Kramer Mountain, are a short walk from Garmisch Elementary-Middle School, School Age Services and the Teen Center.

Eligibility standards for housing

Bedroom eligibility (Family Housing): Minimum bedroom authorizations will be determined based on family size and composition according to housing regulation (same gender children share a room up to 10 years of age and opposite sex can share a room until 6 years of age – no more than two children may share a room in any case).

All services, including Air Force personnel, are credited with the Date Departed Last Duty Station in CONUS as their eligibility date.

No advance applications will be processed for addition to the waiting list.

Bachelors drawing a housing allowance without dependent rate BAQ in grades E-7 and above are authorized to live off post. For those desiring to live on post BOQ/SEQs are located in the Breitenau Housing Area. However, there is very limited shared storage space in these quarters.

Information gathered from the AR 420-1 and the USAREUR Supplement to AR 420-1.

30 TV channels, including Armed Forces Network stations, and a variety of stations in German and other languages. The installation of a private satellite dish is not permitted.

"You will not need garden tools, and should bring only balcony-sized (4feet long by 3 inches deep) patio furniture, unless you occupy SGOQ

duplex quarters," said Hawkridge. "The garrison self-help store can provide some garden tools on loan. The auto craft shop has a wide range of mechanical tools for working on your car."

IMCOM Europe has a "mandatory assignment to government housing" policy for service members with command-sponsored dependents.



A spacious dining room and kitchen with parquet floors comes partially furnished with major appliances.

MPs increase enforcement to keep residents safe

Story and photo by
JOHN REESE

USAG Garmisch Public Affairs

The Directorate of Emergency Services advises drivers and bicyclists entering Artillery and Sheridan kasernes of changes to post traffic signs and speed limits, and stepped-up enforcement of bicycle and safe driving rules.

"Some of the changes take place immediately," said military policeman Spc. Christopher Fimpel, traffic safety supervisor. "Others, such as new crosswalks and handicapped spaces, will have to wait until spring when the snow is gone."

The changes affect the driving habits of garrison residents more than visitors, as community members are used to long-standing post road rules.

On both post entrances, bicyclists are obliged to dismount and walk their bikes to gain access. Riders aren't supposed to use the traffic lanes. On all Army installations, bicycle helmets are required; otherwise riders will be walking their two-wheeler while on post.

Riding out of the saddle with only one foot on a pedal doesn't count as walking. For exiting, riders may use the gate bypass on Artillery and navigate between the bollards on Sheridan.

On Sheridan, the speed for the connector road to the Marshall Center just inside the Sheridan gate increased from 15 kph to 20 kph. This is the section of road that passes Mueller Fitness Center and has the flashing red speed indicator. As drivers exit Sheridan, the stop sign

is now a yield sign, with traffic between the gate and the hotel having right-of-way.

The opposite is happening near Artillery's main gate; upon entering the garrison business area between the MP station and Building 250, the yield sign is now a stop sign, said Fimpel.

"The parking loop for headquarters (Building 203) will become one-way traffic, matching the parking angle, and a handicapped parking space will be added," said Fimpel.

The entire school zone will see a reduction in speed from 30 kph to 20 kph, and a new crosswalk will be added by School Age Services (Building 715), said Fimpel.

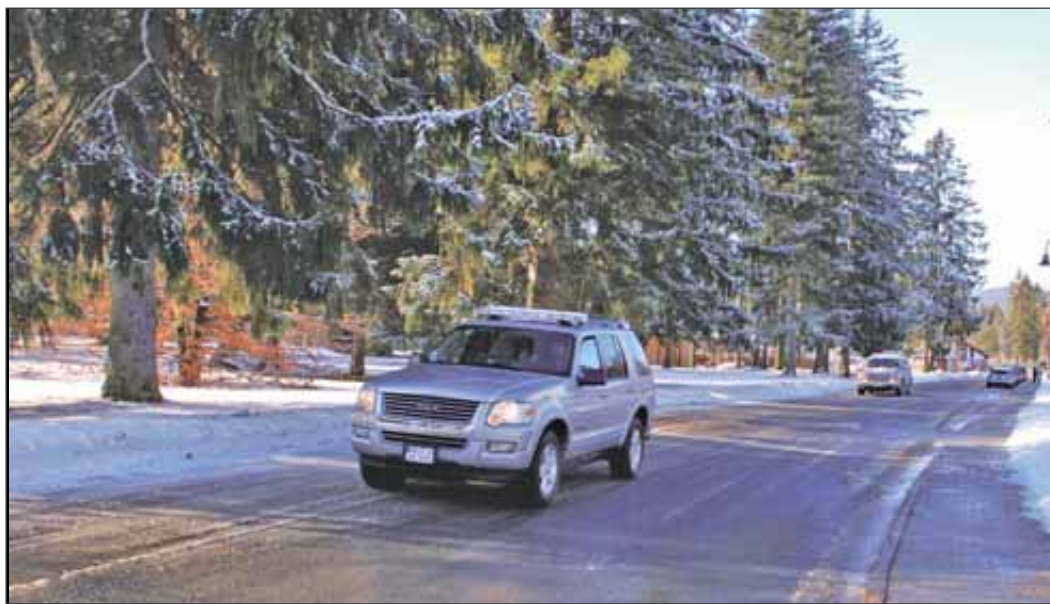
"Crosswalk signs will be posted and drivers must yield for pedestrians," said Fimpel.

"The MPs are also watching for drivers using cell phones, cars idling longer than the German law of three to five minutes, and cars driving without the snow and ice being cleared first," added Sgt. First Class Jeremy Herring, provost sergeant.

Frederic Maten, transportation operations supervisor for the garrison motor pool, emphasized the need to clear snow and ice off of nontactical government vehicles.

"Be aware of the risks regarding ice and snow hazards," said Maten. "It is mandatory to check and always remove dangerous roof load like snow and ice before driving."

That load of snow and ice can affect the driver behind you, and that means trouble with the German polizei. According to the TMP, drivers can be ticketed and fined for jeopardizing traffic, and if people should get



Military police patrol Garmisch following changes to post signs and speed limits. MPs will be making frequent patrols in the school zone to enforce the lower speed limit.

injured or even killed, host nation prosecutors will investigate according to German penal law Section 229, bodily injury caused by negligence, and Section 222, manslaughter.

That goes for privately owned vehicles, too, and with the Click-it or Ticket and drunken driving awareness programs currently underway, garrison law enforcement is on a heightened sense of awareness, said Herring.

"I would like to add a note about contacting

the military police right away when a person is involved in an accident with a USAREUR-plated vehicle," said Staff Sgt. Jerame Stoffer, senior desk sergeant.

A failure to report an accident of any magnitude could cost drivers extra points against their driving record — even their license.

"The focus is on safe driving," said Fimpel. "We want everyone to come home alive."

GO HOME!

Visit the U.S. Army Garrison Garmisch Web page, www.garmisch.army.mil, for up-to-date news, events, contact information and much more.



12th Chemical Co. trains for war

by Capt. PHILLIP WOLFE
12th Chemical Company

Soldiers from the 12th Chemical Company, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade based in Schweinfurt, Germany, rehearsed battle drills and practiced responding to hazardous materials incidents during a 14-day training exercise in Grafenwoehr, Germany, recently.

Soldiers ran through mounted and dismounted maneuvers including reacting to unexploded ordnance, reacting to contact, evaluating a casualty and conducting ground medical evacuations. Following the drills Soldiers practiced using the Army’s “Blue Force Tracker,” a GPS-based computer system that monitors the location of friendly forces and rehearsed tactical night driving and hazardous material incident response.

“The training was good to show that we are ready to deploy and execute our mission, to understand how we fit into the strategic plan, and then to be able to pass our lessons learned on to the rest of the platoons,” said Sgt. Christopher Guyer, biological integrated detection systems team leader, 12th Chemical Co.

“The training is essential to a chemical company,” said 1st Sgt. Sharon McCann. “The Soldiers have not always had the opportunity to deploy and perform in a chemical company capacity.”

The mission was simple: patrol the course of the range from checkpoint one to eight and respond to whatever situation arose.

Each team was comprised of two vehicles. Personnel included two team leaders, two drivers, two gunners and two back-up gunners. The training was scheduled in iterations including dry fire, blank fire and then finally a live-fire round.

“I have been in 12th Chemical now for three years, and this was by far the best training I’ve ever seen,” said Spc. Andix Madriz, petroleum supply specialist.



Soldiers from the 12th Chemical Company, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, prepare for training by donning personal protective equipment. The “Hellfire” Company performed multiple battle drills including a live-fire exercise during a 14-day field training exercise in Grafenwoehr, Germany.



The annual Army Family Action Plan Conference will be held at Schweinfurt Feb. 8-10. Issues can be submitted online at www.schweinfurt.army.mil/sites/acs/afap/afap.htm or placed in drop boxes found at ACS, the Commons, mailrooms and the library.

Army Family Action Plan conference coming soon

Story and photo by
EMILY ATHENS
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

The Army Family continues to grow, and with growth inevitably comes change. A large amount of these positive transformations within the Army are a result of the Army Family Action Plan, or AFAP.

Dating back to the 1980s, AFAP has been an effective program for years providing a network of communication between local communities and the senior Army leadership. It has played an integral part in countless improvements Armywide, including bettering family readiness groups, launching the Thrift Savings Plan, and creating more jobs, to name a few.

“It’s a tool for the big Army to know what is going on and what is needed throughout all levels. They really do care and want to provide a forum to improve the Army now,” said Jane White, AFAP program manager.

To maintain the program’s momentum, an annual conference is held to assess the community’s needs within a proactive atmosphere. In Schweinfurt, the local-level AFAP conference will be held Monday, Feb. 8, through Wednesday, Feb. 10, at the Conn Community Club.

“Every single issue submitted by the community is addressed at the conference. I receive the issues, divide them up into groups, and then delegates spend three days looking at every issue, small or big, and prioritize three,” White said.

According the Schweinfurt AFAP Web site, these issues “tell leadership what the problem is, why it’s a problem and give a possible solution.”

The delegates must follow a series of steps to ensure a solution to the problem is proposed, White explained.

“We pick the issues that may have the biggest impact on the community and the entire Army, and then rewrite them to meet AFAP criteria and present it to the command team,” she said.

But it doesn’t end there. As a result of the conference, immediate changes can be initiated and according to Hal Snyder, director of Army Community Service, this conference allows everyone to have a voice in making changes at the local level, at the IMCOM Europe level, and at the Army level.

“There have been issues that have generated out of Schweinfurt that have gone all the way up to the Army level, which shows that it doesn’t matter where a good idea is generated, it will go to the senior Army leadership to make the change,” Snyder said. He emphasized that the process is not a complaint process but a way to address an issue and immediately move forward with it.

“Even if an issue doesn’t get priority, it is still addressed. I meet with the command team and say ‘if you can help with this issue, how?’ or ‘if you can’t help with this issue, why?’” White said.

“All in all, no matter how well-intentioned an organization is, something can always be made better. AFAP is important because it shows that everyone in the Army is part of the big Army Family, and our leadership wants to ensure they’re taken care of,” White said.

Issue boxes are placed around the garrison awaiting community input. Additional volunteers are needed to help set up and to assist in managing the work groups by facilitating, transcribing and providing issue support. For more information, call ACS at CIV 09721-96-6933.

‘Alaska Days’ draws hundreds to Schweinfurt

Schweinfurt Cubs host fun, educational winter derby

Story and photo by
NATHAN VAN SCHAİK
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

Alaska Days, the largest event of its kind, brought together Cub Scouts from around Germany, Jan. 23, to provide a fun, learning experience in a wintry setting.

In the United States, a similar event is known as the Klondike Derby.

“The purpose of this event was to give the kids an outdoor winter experience through different games and tasks. It’s not a competition, but it’s a fun experience,” said Fred Gordon, committee chair of Schweinfurt Cub Scout Pack 630.

In all, young scouts and their family members braved the German winter venturing from Ansbach, Frankfurt, Grafenwoehr, Kaiserslautern, Mannheim, Netzaberg, Schweinfurt, Sembach, Vilseck and Wiesbaden. The event attracted a total of 202 scouts, Gordon said.

According to Frank Hanchak, Pack 630 chairman, Schweinfurt has never hosted an event of this magnitude.

“For us, this is big. We’ve never had anything this big before here in Schweinfurt. This is a very big thing for Cub Scout Pack 630,” he said.

The day’s events included a stretcher exercise, a T-shirt relay, winter first aid orientation, a snow-to-water heating challenge, and several other exercises requiring cooperative skills in tune with the Cub Scout promise.

As temperatures dipped below 28 degrees Fahrenheit and snow blanketed the school fields, the spirits were high among scouts, parents and volunteers.

“For us it’s nice to get away from Vilseck and go somewhere different,” said Maj. Jack Pennington, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment. Pennington’s son, Mitchell, is a member of Cub Scout Pack 240.

“It’s something for us and the kids to do. The focus is on the task here and it’s not like their house is right across the street. They’re here with their friends and they try things that they haven’t experienced,” he said.



Scouts from Pack 240 out of Vilseck launch golf balls from a catapult during “Alaska Days” at Schweinfurt Middle School, Jan. 23. The event was hosted by the Schweinfurt Cub Scouts, Pack 630.

The Cub Scouts consist of boys from first through fifth grade, while the Boy Scouts come from sixth through eighth grade, according to Hanchak.

Future events for the Schweinfurt Cub Scouts include the Blue and Gold Banquet in February, and the Cub Scout advancement in May.

Those interested in joining the ranks of the Cub Scouts should contact Fred Gordon at CIV 09725-70-4610.

Cub Scouts from around Germany rendezvous as part of the Alaska Days event at the Schweinfurt Middle School, Jan. 23. A total of 202 scouts from 10 U.S. installations around Germany convened in Schweinfurt to participate in the event.



**Have an idea for a story or an event that needs coverage?
Call the Schweinfurt Public Affairs Office at DSN 354-1400, CIV 09721-96-1400**

Community tackles rising energy costs

Story and photo by
NATHAN VAN SCHAİK
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

As Army budget cuts loom in today’s headlines, U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt officials are gearing up to tackle today’s most prevalent yet adjustable costs: energy consumption.

Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander, Army Installation Management Command, announced last month on the IMCOM Web site the need to reduce costs in the face of recent economic turmoil.

“As the country faces some stiff economic challenges, we are forced to reduce funding and exact a greater level of stewardship over our resources,” Lynch said. “Commanders and leaders across the installation have a key role and are responsible for the efficient use of our resources. Costs should be an inherent consideration in your every decision.”

“The Installation Management Command is tightening its financial belt and we must follow suit”, said Yulanda Reynolds, the garrison’s internal review officer. “Leadership has really been stressing the importance of finding ways to save money.”

“One of Lynch’s top priorities is saving money and one of the ways each and every garrison — CONUS and OCONUS — can achieve that is by cutting down on energy consumption,” Reynolds said.

This prerogative, incidentally, is being funneled down to USAG Schweinfurt.

As internal review officer, Reynolds’ job goes beyond isolating and weeding out fraud, waste and abuse. Part of her job involves finding ways to save money. And that’s why she’s been



As Army budget cuts loom in today’s headlines, U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt officials are gearing up to reduce costs of energy consumption. While leadership works to establish an energy saving program for the community, everyone is encouraged to turn lights off when they leave a room.

Courtesy photo

tasked to spearhead efforts to reduce energy consumption and costs by organizing an energy task force.

Energy conservation, however, will require a community effort.

“This task force is more than just garrison employees, because energy consumption is not just a garrison activity,” Reynolds said.

The task force will include garrison personnel as well as representatives from Department of Defense Dependents Schools, the commissary, AAFES and tenant units.

Reynolds explained that the task force will generate ideas, come up with solutions, and then make real recommendations for cutting down on energy costs.

“The purpose of this meeting is to briefly discuss our current utilities consumption, the

cost situation and, as a community, spend time coming up with ideas and developing solutions to reduce electricity, heat and water consumption, increase awareness and lower utility costs. Our goal is to establish a community energy savings program,” she said.

While the Army is facing significant spending reductions, no specific services have thus far been scheduled for termination in Schweinfurt.

What sort of programs will be initiated to lower energy costs will largely be determined by the outcome of the task force meetings.

Meanwhile, officials from the Directorate of Public Works have already begun to broaden their role in the long-term goal to cut costs.

A radiant heating project was recently completed at Building 35 on Conn Barracks and solar panels were installed at the Conn

gymnasium. Radiant heating systems supply heat directly to floors, walls and ceilings and are more efficient than their baseboard heating counterparts, according to the U.S. Department of Energy Web site.

“We have other projects in the system to put additional radiant heat systems throughout the community. We’ll also add solar panels throughout the community,” said Robin Fisher, acting director of DPW.

Critical to trimming energy costs is oversight. Having the energy control switches at the finger tips of DPW professionals is particularly helpful.

“We have our energy monitoring control system, which we use to monitor the consumption of utilities and we can adjust such things as heating levels,” Fisher said. “We have lots of projects in to upgrade that system so it performs better. That has an energy savings character to it because you can reduce the amount of heat to certain buildings.”

DPW officials, however, do not sit at the control panels monitoring the usage of electricity. Electricity is privatized and is run from the city, Fisher explained. As a result, the responsibility to save on electricity lies squarely on the shoulders of the Schweinfurt community.

“We’re pushing to have people to turn off lights when they’re not in the room,” he said.

Regardless of the projects’ success engineered by public works, the Schweinfurt community can expect to see a greater demand to save on energy.

“If you’re on the garrison homepage, look for the energy savings tip,” Reynolds advised. “If you’re reading the Dispatch, look for the energy savings tip. If we save money on utility bills, then that’s money we can spend on other things for the community. Please help us do that.”

Spelling, geography bees challenge students

Story and photo by
EMILY ATHENS
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

“P-A-N-D-E-M-I-C, pandemic,” Faith Flynn said confidently, solidifying her spot as champion during the Schweinfurt Elementary School spelling bee, Jan. 12.

Flynn, a fifth grader, endured seven rounds of competition, overcoming six fellow spellers who also were able to advance to the seventh round.

“Spelling is an art, a practice,” said Principal Wilma Holt to students at the completion of the bee.

Twenty-one students in grades three through five contended for title of bee champion, but only one advanced to the next round.

“Faith will advance to the European Spelling Bee in Ramstein

on March 13,” Holt said to the audience.

To prepare, Flynn explained that studying is the best thing to do.

“I studied a lot before. Spelling is my favorite because I like the way words sound and look and what they mean,” Flynn said.

Bee runner-up Jadiel Carrillo, also a fifth-grader, secured his spot by spelling the word “embroider.” Carrillo will stand ready in case Flynn is unable to compete in Ramstein, Holt explained.

“Each contestant received a Schweinfurt Elementary School T-shirt and a certificate. The runner-up gets a dictionary and a one-year subscription to Encyclopedia Britannica. The champion gets the same online subscription to Encyclopedia Britannica, plus a \$25

gift certificate to AAFES,” explained Sharon Rakstraw, bee coordinator.

“Spelling can be a difficult task at times, so you all really worked hard,” Holt told students.

Geography Bee

Ten students at Schweinfurt Middle School competed in the annual schoolwide geography bee, a National

Geographic Society initiative to encourage a passion for learning.

Beginning at the community level, students competed in their classrooms to qualify for the competition, consisting of numerous rounds covering all aspects of geography.

After several rounds and tiebreakers, seventh-grader Jada

Edelen bested seventh-grader John Gray, who secured the second place spot, and eighth-grader Ben Adkins, who took third.

Edelen will take a test to be submitted to the National Geographic Society, in hopes to soon qualify for the DoDDS-wide geography bee competition later this year.

Right: Spelling bee champion, Faith Flynn (left) and runner-up Jadiel Carrillo, both fifth graders, smile as they wait to receive their awards. Flynn will advance to the European Spelling Bee in Ramstein, March 13.



Far right: Jada Edelen, a seventh-grader at Schweinfurt Middle School, holds up the correct response during a geography bee, Jan. 20.



Pageantry comes to Schweinfurt

Caitlin Eubanks, left, and Taelor Duncan present their beauty during the Little Miss and Mister Schweinfurt Pageant last year. The annual pageant, hosted by the Schweinfurt Community and Spouses’ Club, will be held Feb. 20 in the Schweinfurt Elementary School Multipurpose Room.

Nine different age categories are available for children ages zero to 19 to enter. In addition, the pageant seeks a Schweinfurt Ms. Division. Women 20 years and older, married or unmarried, are welcome to enter.

The pageant will begin at 10 a.m. for ages zero months to 8 years, and at noon for age categories 9 and up. Contestants must dress in formal or pageant attire and will be judged by a panel of judges.

All proceeds benefit community programs through the Schweinfurt Community and Spouses’ Club welfare grant program. Entry forms can be found at www.schweinfurtspousesclub.com.

Courtesy photo



Joint Multinational Readiness Center Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Graham speaks to community members about the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. at the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 13. Graham spoke about continuing King’s legacy by teaching young children to be tolerant of different people and cultures.

Discussion, speeches celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

The scene at the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels-sponsored luncheon honoring Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday would have been almost unimaginable 60 years ago.

People from all different backgrounds ate together while a choir filled with children of all races sang songs about equality and peace.

In 1950, just 60 years ago and five years before King lead the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, that scene would have been impossible; yet because of his perseverance, it is now not only possible, it is common.

“He (King) had a dream that: ‘Little black boys and girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls as sisters and brothers’ and I am so glad today that we have the school kids here so we can see it, sitting right here today,” guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Graham, Joint Multinational Readiness Center, said during the luncheon, Jan. 13. “Not only did he break those barriers in the United States, but he has broken those barriers worldwide.”

To honor his achievements securing equal civil rights for African Americans, Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a federal

holiday in 1983 and each year USAG Hohenfels participates in the celebration.

To start off this year’s event, Samuel Aundrá Fryer, JMRC military maneuver analyst and counselor for the garrison’s Equal Employment Opportunity program, facilitated an interactive discussion, “Today Through the Eyes of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.” during which participants discussed what King might have thought about contemporary issues such as segregation, religion and poverty while Fryer offered insight from King’s speeches and sermons.

Many participants said one of King’s most lasting legacies was his commitment to justice for all people and the use of nonviolence to achieve it.

“He (King) was one of the greatest advocates of the 20th century of the fact that every problem can be solved without violence,” said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Frank O’Grady.

“He knew change doesn’t come overnight. It took time. It took effort. It took a lot of preaching and prayer and a lot of example; he led by example. We must lead by example and not tell anyone to do anything we’re not willing to do ourselves.”

Graham also spoke about King’s nonviolent methods and his deep commitment to them.

Between 1957 and 1968, said Graham, King traveled more than six million miles around the country giving more than 2,500 speeches. During that time he wrote numerous books, organized marches and protests and was arrested more than 20 times.

The movement King lead broke down barriers and forever changed the way minorities are treated in America, said Graham.

“Today minorities have the freedom of speech, the freedom to move where they want to, the freedom to achieve any education they desire, the freedom to vote, freedom to ride any mode of public transportation, freedom to run for government offices. Some of these things you could not do before the civil rights movement,” said Graham.

“No matter what background you are, you should continue to strive to make this world better and promote peace and continued equality for us all,” Graham said.

Graham also had a message for parents. “Start early to teach young people, from the time they are old enough to understand, to be more tolerant of each other’s cultures, languages and religions,” he said. “Start teaching them young to tolerate and respect. If we do that, we may not live to see it some of us, but later on down the road it will be a better world.”

Single Soldiers relax, regroup during retreat

Garmisch setting allows Soldiers to build resiliency, physically and mentally

by **KRISTIN BRADLEY**
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

Like Soldiers throughout the Army, single Soldiers in 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment know well the meaning of the words ‘high operations tempo.’ The Hohenfels battalion not only deploys one company to Afghanistan every six to nine months, it also serves as the opposing forces for the Joint Multinational Readiness Center’s many training rotations. That busy schedule can make quiet time hard to come by.

To provide Soldiers with some much-needed time and space to themselves, the 1-4th Inf. Regt. Chaplain’s Office hosts retreats, one for married couples and one for single Soldiers, following each company’s redeployment.

The most recent single Soldier retreat was held in Garmisch, Germany, at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, Jan. 8-10, and though geared toward Soldiers from Company B, the most recent 1-4th Inf. Regt. company to redeploy from Afghanistan, welcomed Soldiers from throughout the battalion.

Chaplain (Capt.) Britton Price said the retreat is meant to provide Soldiers a few days away from Hohenfels to relax and have fun while also providing them with strategies to build resiliency that will help them cope with the stresses of work and deployment.

Sgt. Paul Baggett, chaplain assistant, said the retreats are especially beneficial for single Soldiers who live in on-post barracks that may feel they never really leave work.

“For these guys to be taken out of their element, where nothing is required except maybe to listen for a little while, is very smart,” said Baggett. “When you’re busy you suppress things. You say: ‘I’ll get to it tomorrow’ and tomorrow becomes 365 days from now and you’re cracking.”

Price said he planned the retreat based on the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness concept, an Army program that emphasizes five dimensions of strength: physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual.

“We talked about how without a strong mind and spirit you can be strong in body but you will fall apart eventually,” said Sgt. Geoffrey Erickson, a 1-4th Inf. Regt. Soldier who went on the January retreat. “He (Price) was basically saying you’ve got a lot of things on your mind, here’s something for your spirit.”

Price said that especially after a deployment like Co. B’s during which their company commander was killed and several other Soldiers wounded, it is important for Soldiers to be encouraged to work through their emotions.

“I know they are thinking things like, ‘Why that guy? He was such a good guy.’ I know they have questions like that, even if they don’t voice

See RETREAT page 24

Garrison re-opens renovated barracks for single Soldiers

Buildings 853 and 373 are next on the list of planned renovations at Hohenfels

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 527th Military Police Company at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels will soon be moving into a completely renovated barracks following a ribbon-cutting ceremony that re-opened Building 386, Jan. 22.

The First Sergeant’s Barracks Program, a section within the garrison’s housing division, guided the project, the second total barracks renovation within the last year.

The FSBP is an Armywide initiative to transfer control of barracks from units and first sergeants to garrison housing staff with the goal of standardizing and upgrading the quality of single Soldier housing while freeing first sergeants of some of their barracks-related duties. Currently, the Hohenfels FSBP has assumed control of 31 of post’s 34 barracks, updating and renovating them as funding allows and need dictates.

Though only Soldiers from the 527th will

be housed in Building 386, USAG Hohenfels Command Sgt. Maj. Brenda Kadet said the barracks’ opening marks a step in the right direction for all Hohenfels Soldiers.

“This is a very good day for single Soldiers, not just the ones living in this barracks, but for all the single Soldiers in the community,” Kadet said at the opening ceremony.

According to Perry Clark, Hohenfels FSBP manager, the garrison has already secured funding to upgrade Buildings 853 and 373, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment and Joint Multinational Readiness Center barracks, respectively.

Though funding for such renovations can be difficult to come by, Kadet said she and Lt. Col. Kevin Quarles, garrison commander, would like all barracks to meet the standards of Building 386.

“All you want as a leader is for your Soldiers to have it a little better than you did growing up. Every senior leader here today — some fondly, some not so fondly — remember how they grew up and the quality of barracks they lived in and the quality of life they enjoyed. This is the personification of what we can do as leaders to make life better for our single Soldiers, who deserve exactly what their married counterparts

See BARRACKS page 24



A 527th Military Police Company Soldier inspects the newly renovated barracks rooms in Building 386. The \$600,000 total renovation was celebrated with a ribbon cutting, Jan. 22, during which U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Command Sgt. Maj. Brenda Kadet thanked the garrison’s First Sergeant’s Barracks Program staff for their hard work and dedication to improve the quality of life for Hohenfels’ single Soldiers.

Rifle team heads to 2nd national competition

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

The Hohenfels High School Rifle Team will soon be packing up their scopes and heading to the United States to compete for the second year in a row at the Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Service Championship where they said they hope to improve upon last year’s fifth place national ranking.

Emily Adams, Sarah Adams, Erin Redden and Jessica Walloch will test their skills against Army JROTC’s top 16 teams at Camp Perry, Ohio, Feb. 19 and 20.

“We want to at least place fourth so we can go back in March,” for the all-service championship, said Sarah Adams, a ranking they missed by four points last year.

Hohenfels has held a reputation as one of the top rifle programs in Europe in recent years and much of that experience is going with them to Camp Perry. Redden is the only shooter who will be attending the championship for the first time in this year: fourth-year shooter Walloch and the Adams sisters, both with three years of competitive shooting experience, were part of the 2009 team.

Hohenfels had the top shooter in Europe for the past three years: Walloch last year and Sarah Adams in 2008. Wallach placed 12th out of the 62 best Army JROTC shooters at Camp Perry in 2009. Retired 1st Sgt. Bruce Andrews has coached the Hohenfels team to 14 conference titles and three European titles in the past 15 years.

The 2010 European Conference Championship will take place at Hohenfels, Jan. 30, the results of which were not available at press time.

“It’s not so much pressure, but a goal,” Walloch said when asked if they feel pressure to out-do their previous performance. “Once we get there we will want to do better.”



Shooters Sarah and Emily Adams practice for the Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Service Championship, Jan. 25. Last year’s team, which included Walloch and the Adams’ sisters, placed fifth in the school’s first-ever showing at the national competition. This year’s competition will take place Feb. 19 and 20.

“We look at matches (in Europe) as practice (for Camp Perry). There are people around you and the spectators add some pressure that takes some getting used to,” said Emily Adams.

Though some aspects of competition are the same on either side of the Atlantic, the girls said there are differences that make competing in the championship a bit more intense.

“Here we do 10 (shots) in one position; that usually takes about 20 minutes. There you do 20 in one position, which is like 30 minutes,” said Sarah Adams. “There’s some conditioning there.”

“Each shooter has an individual monitor and this big screen behind you that shows everyone your score,” said Emily Adams. “It’s pretty intense.”

Despite the inherent added pressure of a national championship, the team said one of their strong suits is their

ability to remain calm.

“We’re usually calmed down more than everyone else. We’re all doing our own thing; it’s just you out there,” said Emily Adams.

“And your teammates tell you to stay calm,” said Redden.

Andrews said keeping their nerves in check will be crucial to the team’s success.

“They have all the big stuff down; it’s the little things now,” said Andrews. “They need to keep their mind concentrated on what they’re doing and take care of the little things.”

Before they can even start shooting, Andrews said the team needs to raise approximately \$7,000 for transportation and lodging expenses. He said they have been holding fundraisers and bagging groceries at the commissary and have petitioned private organizations for grants toward



The Hohenfels High School Rifle Team practice their prone technique during an after-school session.

that total.

During the championship at Camp Perry, spectators can watch the results live from Hohenfels by visiting www.odcmp.com. Andrews said the site

will show an image of each shooter’s target, up to four different shooters at once. Hohenfels will not shoot until late afternoon (Ohio time) Friday, but will begin shooting at 8 a.m. Saturday.

Historian shares ‘killer’ history

by **TODD OLIVER**
JMRC Public Affairs

Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Hammond was a wanted man, so much so that there was a bounty flyer offered for his death. During a training exercise, the commander of the 1-77th Armored Regiment told his Soldiers, “anyone who kills him gets a four-day pass.”

No one collected that pass, of course, and Hammond added to his ‘kill count’ the commander who offered the reward.

“At the time I was the lead company scout for 1-4 Infantry (1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment that serves as opposing forces for training exercises),” Hammond said. “For that particular mission the training unit’s scout section leader had been a company commander in 1-4 Infantry and he was boasting how he knew how the opposing forces here operated and how he was going to win.”

Obviously, it wasn’t to be.

“We completely destroyed the battalion’s scout section,” Hammond said. “Nobody got the pass and I personally killed the company commander.”

To this day, Hammond holds the record for the most ‘kills’ with 427.

“I was still the reigning guy when we changed the way we conducted our training rotations. I just knew the box (the Hohenfels Training Area), basically that’s it.”

Hammond left the opposing forces in July 2005 and eventually became the commandant of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center Observer/Controller Academy, channeling his knowledge of the box in a different direction.

With a master’s degree in history, the history of the Hohenfels Training Area is a topic that fills Hammond with passion.

Throughout the last 16 years, with a one-year break during a deployment to Iraq, Hammond has been sharing that history with students attending the Observer/Controller Academy, and anyone else he can.

Although history has been Hammond’s fascination for many years, it was at JMRC that the interest blossomed.

Because he lived in Germany, Hammond



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Walker

Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Hammond, commandant of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center’s Observer/Controller Academy, teaches about history relating to U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels.

found his attention focusing more and more on World War II. He used to give Soldiers of 1-4th Inf. Regt. and all newly arrived officers to JMRC tours of the box. Eventually he developed a one-hour block of instruction for the O/C Academy.

“It comes up in conversations between the O/Cs and the training unit,” he said. “From small talk while getting to know the unit, to standing under the ruins of the Hohenberg Castle, they (training units) ask ‘what’s that?’ They (O/Cs) should be as knowledgeable about the training area as they are about other doctrine about the box.”

There are two particular points in that history that fascinate him.

“The first is the 1938 evacuation of the east side of the box by the Germans, and the 1951 evacuation by the Americans of the west side of the box,” he said. “They were communities, there were people that owned this farmland for hundreds of years and then the government comes in and says ‘you need to move.’

“Large, very large towns, like Lutz-

mannstein or Kittensee and Griffenwang all along the west side that even during World War II had cobblestone roads, beautiful churches with frescos on the ceilings and people that had lived there for years and years and years and you go out there today and there’s nothing but silence. To me it’s fascinating.”

Hammond and his family are set to leave for Fort Drum, N.Y., in July and he said he hopes the history lessons don’t leave with him.

“I hope that it turns into something like they have at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., with guided tours and such because for so long this history of the training area was neglected,” said Hammond.

According to JMRC, tours of the box are planned to start in February.

“I hope it stays here at the academy so we don’t repeat those mistakes of the past and that we develop an appreciation of the history that actually took place in the training area before it became a training area. For me, I just think it’s important.”

Georgians train for Afghanistan

by **Marine Sgt. ROCCO DEFILIPPIS**
Marine Forces Europe Public Affairs

Troops from the Republic of Georgia’s 31st Light Infantry Battalion arrived at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in January for a two-week training evolution that will serve as a final mission evaluation for their upcoming deployment in support of International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan.

The final mission rehearsal exercise comes as a final examination for the Georgian battalion, the first of four battalions to undergo training through the Georgia Deployment Program, a Marine Corps-led initiative meant to prepare the Georgians for their Afghanistan deployment.

According to Marine Lt. Col. Dan Thoele, Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group deputy director, the MRE will provide the final evaluation that the Marine Expeditionary Brigade Afghanistan commander will use to determine the mission set for the Georgians when they arrive in theater.

“All of the training that (the 31st Battalion) has received over the past four months during the GDP will be evaluated throughout the MRE,” Thoele said.

During the first half of the exercise, the Georgians will conduct a wide variety of operations that reflect the mission sets common to ISAF forces in Afghanistan such as area security, cordon and search operations, deliberate live-fire attacks with mortar and sniper integration, command post exercises and more, according to Thoele.

The addition of role-playing civilians on the battlefield and a dedicated opposition force will also serve to maximize the training’s impact.

“We have tried to make this training as realistic as possible,” Thoele said. “The facilities and data collection capabilities here at the JMRC allow for a very thorough evaluation.”

“Our soldiers are very motivated and hungry for this training,” said Georgian Army Capt. Shalva Dzindzibadze, chief of staff for the 31st Battalion.

Following the initial week of battle drills, live-fire, situational and specialty training, the 31st Battalion will begin the final exercise which will test all the skills it has honed during the previous four months of the GDP, according to Thoele.

In addition to the offensive and defensive portions of combat-related scenarios, Thoele said the final exercise will also focus heavily on cultural awareness scenarios like key leader engagements and town and provincial council

See MARINES page 24

Tiger hoops

Hohenfels' Miguel Chesnut shoots over a Bamberg Baron defender during a game at Hohenfels. After losing at Bamberg 62-52, Jan. 15, the Tigers made a comeback at home the next night, beating the Barons 61-39. Top scorers for Hohenfels during the Jan. 16 game were Jamie Thompkins with 18 points, Jordan Gaddy with 13 points and Dominic Jackson and Leon Atkins with 9 points each. The Tigers went on to beat Vilseck the next weekend, 50-42 at home on Friday and 75-59 Saturday at Vilseck.

Lady Tiger Daphne Nash attempts to maneuver her way around towering Bamberg player Raquel Davis during a matchup at Hohenfels. Bamberg bested Hohenfels 47-14 at Hohenfels, Jan. 16, after beating them 52-26 at Bamberg, Jan. 15. Hohenfels' top scorers Saturday were Erica Nash and Mandy Lavanway, each with 6 points. The Lady Tigers also struggled the next weekend against Vilseck, losing 45-16 at home Friday and 46-14 at Vilseck Saturday.

Photos by Kristin Bradley



Marines prepare Georgians

Continued from page 23

meetings. "Our soldiers are very motivated and hungry for this training," said Georgian Army Capt. Shalva Dzindzibadze, chief of staff for the 31st Battalion. "They want to improve their skills and abilities. It's a great opportunity for our battalion and they take pride that they are the first to go through the training and show what Georgia has to offer."

Following the initial week of battle drills, live-fire, situational and specialty training, the 31st Battalion will begin the final exercise which will test all the skills it has honed during the previous four months of the GDP, according to Thoele.

According to Marine Lt. Col. David Gruss, Marine Forces Europe/JMRC liaison officer, the final exercise is set up to simulate a 72-hour war where the Georgians will execute an

operation order that focuses on four key enabler mission sets: operations against anticoalition forces, development of Afghan National Security Forces, development of government institutions, and infrastructure and economic development.

After the initial 72-hours, the final exercise will briefly pause for a midaction review, and then will start over with another 72-hour evolution, according to Gruss.

Throughout the whole evolution, opposition forces simulating the Taliban will continually attempt to thwart the Georgian attempts to complete the enabler objectives.

In addition to the offensive and defensive portions of combat-related scenarios, Thoele said the final exercise will also focus heavily on cultural awareness scenarios like key leader engagements and town and provincial council meetings.



Photo by Sgt. Paul Baggett

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment catch some much-needed rest on the way to a Chaplain's Office retreat in Garmisch, Germany, Jan. 8.

Retreat helps build strong minds, spirits

Continued from page 22

it to me. Those are questions that need to be wrestled with and I tried to give them some directions to wrestle," said Price.

Soldiers said Price spoke about using spirituality to help build resiliency, though he did not preach about any one religion in particular.

"He was not telling us what to think, but how to think," said Pfc. Codeui McDougal.

Baggett said the Chaplain's Office tries to give Soldiers a tool belt of strategies to work with: different people prefer different tools, so the office provides many tools for them to choose from.

Price said keeping the discussion about spirituality in general instead of "beating them over the head with religion at something that is not specifically religious," allowed

him to build trust with the Soldiers, which he hopes will make them more comfortable seeking him out later if they want or need to talk.

The weekend wasn't entirely focused on emotions and trust, however.

Price said he purposely kept sessions short so each Soldier could unwind in his own way. For some that meant hitting the slopes, for some it meant simply relaxing in the hotel. Some chose to spend time talking one-on-one with the chaplain.

Whether it is during a hectic week at Hohenfels or during the retreat in Garmisch, Price said he hopes Soldiers feel comfortable talking to him whenever they need to.

"I'm the one Soldier they can say anything to; it stays with me," said Price.

Barracks improve Soldier quality of life

Continued from page 22

have, and this is showing you what we can provide and what we're dedicated to providing to you.

"The leaders on this post are not going to stop fighting until we get all of our barracks up to this level," said Kadet.

Soldiers who toured the barracks said they were impressed with the new quarters.

"I want to come down here," said Pfc. Amber Hammond, 527th MP Co. "Whoever gets to move in here is very lucky."

Sgt. Kim Bower, a 527th Soldier set to move into the newly renovated building, said upgrading living space is an important way leaders can take care of Soldiers.

"Having a nice new facility like this will make Soldiers feel more at home. It's really wonderful," said Bower.

After the \$600,000 renovation, the building now features brand new kitchen and laundry rooms and suite style barracks where residents share one bathroom between only two rooms.

The noncommissioned officer in charge of monitoring the building's upkeep, 1st Sgt. Steven Bourns, said the barracks is worlds away from what he remembers as a young Soldier.

"This is night and day from years ago when I came up when we had four Soldiers in a room with four bunks and four wall lockers. This gives them more space, more freedom. They really have it made," said Bourns.

Far from bunks and communal showers,

the building now also includes an intercom that allows residents to buzz in visitors from their rooms and keys that are programmed to open the outer door, a suite door and a room door so a resident only needs one key to open three doors.

Clark said though not all buildings will require a total renovation, he thinks all

Soldiers deserve rooms of the same standard as those in Building 386 and said he and the rest of the FSBP will work to make that happen, no matter how long it takes.

"This building is just one example of how the (FSBP staff) have been unmercifully dedicated to improving single Soldier housing throughout this community," said Kadet.



Soldiers inspect the new kitchen in Building 386, a barracks that was completely renovated and recently re-opened by the First Sergeant's Barracks Program at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels. At the ribbon cutting ceremony, Jan. 22, USAG Hohenfels Command Sgt. Maj. Brenda Kadet told Soldiers there is more to come. According to FSBP officials, buildings 853 and 373 are next on the list of planned renovations.

Feedback will help system address needs of community

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The new Army Lodging Hotel project is on schedule and set to open June 2011. The new 136-room hotel will accommodate nearly double the amount of guests allotted for the Tower Inn.

Changes at AAFES

Marla Smith, the new Grafenwoehr Consolidated Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) general manager, introduced herself to the community and spoke of changes in place for AAFES establishments, including the plans to place a Manchu Wok within the Burger King and Antonio's Pizza facility.

The Main Post Shoppette will be open 24 hours a day during the month of February. This is a trial period only, explained Smith, and will continue if demand is needed.

The Grafenwoehr community will enjoy a new place to sip coffee in May 2010. A construction plan will turn Lane 25 into a Java Cafe, much like the cafe currently serving the Rose Barracks community. Additionally, a new restaurant, Primo's Pizza, will share the space. Primo's Pizza will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner and offer a diverse menu with numerous food choices. Additionally, the new Pizza Hut at the PX will offer delivery service on-post, predicted to start in May.

Money matters

Money was another hot topic as Sorenson spoke of the current budget situation, stating the current 2010 fiscal year budget for IMCOM has a shortfall. Sorenson explained the community might see a slight decrease in certain services but the command would not sacrifice health, safety or security. He also reiterated the commitment to the Army Family Covenant, saying it would not be affected.

Sorenson asked the community to assist in the budget issue by being conscious of energy use in the home and office.

Closing window and entrance doors, turning off lights and computers when not in use and replacing light bulbs with compact florescent lights are effective ways to conserve energy.

Additionally, the garrison will reduce the evening exterior lighting levels on post, install solar panels at select facilities and automatically reduce room temperatures at night and on weekends to alleviate some cost.

Welcoming newcomers

Mary Cooper, Directorate of Human Resources, spoke of numerous programs aimed at in-processing family members, including the family member bus tour. The tour allows newly arriving family members a change to learn the location of key agencies on Main Post and Rose Barracks. However, participation has been low. Cooper urged the community to take advantage of these free services.

Tax season has arrived and the tax centers are now open. The two centers on Main Post and Rose Barracks offer free service to all Soldiers, family members and DoD employees. In 2008, the tax centers assisted more than 11,500 tax filers, saving them 1.5 million dollars in preparation and filing fees and brought more than 22 million dollars in refunds.

AFAP is back

Simone Larson, program manager for Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) explained the Armywide program, set for March 9-10, would aid to improve Army quality of life. Through AFAP, all members of the Army, including Active, Reserve, and National Guard Soldiers, family members, retirees, surviving spouses, DA civilians, and military technicians have a forum to voice concerns to Army leadership and make recommendations for change. Numerous programs including a higher overseas cost of living allowance and the recent allowable transfer of G.I. Bill benefits to military dependents is a direct result of past AFAP conferences.

All community members are invited to submit issues in the yellow AFAP submission boxes at various locations on Main Post and Rose Barracks, by e-mailing simone.larson@eur.army.mil, through the USAG Grafenwoehr Web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil/cms.asp#afap, or by calling the office at DSN 476-2237, 475-2797, CIV 09662-83-2237, 09662-83-2797.

Another venue to voice opinions is the interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) system. More than 300 submissions have been made through ICE in the month of January, and all submissions are read, logged and addressed, according to Sorenson.

"The system works," said Salazar. "What I ask you to do is use it."



Photo by Capt. Stephen C. Short

GARMISCH, Germany - Soldiers and family members of the 172nd Infantry Brigade "Blackhawks" gather for a group photo, Jan. 24, during their Castone Event following their yearlong deployment to Iraq. During the event, held Jan. 21-24, leaders and family members held an after-action review, attended training and relaxed in a friendly social setting.

New NCOs receive specialized training

Story and photo by
EMILY BRAINARD
Army News Service

FORT RUCKER, Ala. - Recent Armywide course transformations help Noncommissioned Officer Academy students prepare now for future ranks and responsibilities, officials said.

Students now complete either the Advanced Leader Course or Senior Leader Course, formerly known as Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses until the October transformation, NCO Academy Commandant Command Sgt. Maj. Marlin Smith said.

The switch to ALC and SLC is a Department of the Army-directed program through the NCO Education System. New ALC and SLC material focuses on what lies ahead for Soldiers and not just the tasks at hand, Smith noted. BNCOC and ANCOC had only focused on Soldiers' current jobs.

"We need leaders who know how to think, not what to think," Smith said. "The purpose of the transformation is to provide noncommissioned officers with the right training and education early enough in their career(s) to meet the complex leadership challenges they are facing in today's contemporary operating environment."

Finalizing the transformation took about one year before its autumnal implementation, he said.

The revamping was part of the 2009 Year of the NCO campaign, Smith said, "to recognize the contributions of the NCO Corps to the Army and the nation, but also

(to) review all NCO training to identify areas to improve training and education across the entire NCO Corps."

Smith said as many as 800 NCOs, mostly staff sergeants and sergeants first class, walk through the institution's doors annually. During the students' four to six weeks here, Soldiers now learn a variety of skills, including warrior tasks, battle drills, mission planning and more. Classes also participate in 72-hour field training exercises held at the installation forward operating base.

He also added due to the transformation the courses were lengthened by a few days to focus training on higher level leader tasks, knowledge management and professional writing assignments.

All small group leaders, or instructors, received special training in light of the transformation. Smith said instructors were equipped with "updated training concerning Comprehensive Soldier fitness, suicide prevention, knowledge management and culture awareness."

One ALC SGL who believes the specialized training helps him better lead students is Staff Sgt. Timothy Johnson.

"It's real-world training," he said. "It allowed me to have some insight on how to communicate and focus the groups onto the objective."

While SGLs monitor classes, Smith said most of the learning occurs when classmates share personal experiences and teach each other. This is one thing that has remained constant throughout



Soldiers from the Noncommissioned Officer Academy on Fort Rucker, Ala., participate in a Leadership Reaction Course obstacle. The course tested NCOs' leadership abilities, teamwork and communication skills.

the metamorphosis.

The academy on Fort Rucker trains Soldiers from almost every Aviation military occupation

specialty, and ALC and SLC are promotion prerequisites for Soldiers.

Editor's Note: Emily Brainard writes for the Army Flier.

OCOLA ensures parity with U.S. counterparts

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accumulated difference or variance reaches 5 percent, DTMO employs the currency Adjustment Model to set a new PSER. The PSER may not be the same as the exchange rate at the bank window. Since Dec. 16, 2009, there has been an 8 percent difference between the pay system exchange rate and the actual rate of exchange, which equates to a six point drop in the OCOLA Index for Germany.

The PSER is a critical factor in computing the amount of COLA service members receive. A change in the PSER translates into a change in the COLA Index. However, only the portion attributed to local purchases is adjusted, not points attributed to on-base purchases. For installations in Germany that are considered "full support locations," the index changed from 128 to 122; for "partial support installations" the index went from 130 to 124; for "no support installations" from 154 to 146; and for Garmisch from 134 to 128. Vilseck-Grafenwoehr/Hohenfels changed

from 132 to 126.

For example, a Germany-based staff sergeant with three dependents and 10 years of service based in the Vilseck/Grafenwoehr/ Hohenfels area will see his or her OCOLA decrease for a 30-day-month from \$882.66 to \$717.16 -- a \$165.50 reduction.

Service members are reminded that OCOLA is designed to offset the higher prices of nonhousing goods and services overseas so that service members can afford to purchase the same level of goods and services as if they were stationed in the U.S. OCOLA ensures economic parity with CONUS counterpart's spending patterns and levels. It compares prices of goods and services overseas with prices in CONUS for equivalent goods and services.

COLA is paid as a percentage of a member's spendable income, not total disposable income. COLA is also based on the member's grade, years of service and family size. It is designed

to offset expenses related to food consumed at home, food consumed away from home, clothing, personal care, tobacco and alcohol, car purchase, household operations, transportation, recreation medical care and telephone.

Service members can calculate their COLA rate at the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee Web site at www.defensetravel.dod.mil/perdiem. The calculation tool is updated with the current COLA amounts each pay period. Service members need only enter their locality code or locality name, rank, years of service, number of dependents, and specify whether they live in the barracks or not.

Service members who have questions about COLA policies may call the U.S. Army Europe personnel directorate's Germany Country Allowance Coordinator at 370-3888.

Editor's Note: The U.S. Army Europe Personnel Directorate's Germany Country Allowance Coordinator contributed reporting.